THRIVING IN TRANSITION:

The personal characteristics and processes of thriving in young males in periods of geographic dislocation

Martin W. Harris

BA, B.Ed, MEd (Admin), MEd Studies

Lecturer in Rural Health

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University of Tasmania

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Abstract

This study examined the personal characteristics and processes of thriving in a group of young men during a geographically dislocating transition. The concept of thriving broadened the traditional vulnerability and coping focus of transition research, to one that incorporated positive learning and growth. The challenging circumstances surrounding geographic dislocation provided the context for these characteristics and processes to be examined and explained.

The study was conducted with 24 young male, elite athletes drawn from the Australian Football League who were required to relocate to take up their player contracts. A partially mixed, sequential design was employed, firstly to identify the features of the participant group. Despite their homogeneity on a range of instruments, the outcome variations were not adequately explained. Subsequently, the particular characteristics and processes that contributed to thriving were examined. From the results, a comprehensive analysis of the experience of the geographically dislocating transition identified a principle group of 16 characteristics (concepts) and associated processes. Based on variations in these identified concepts, the study's participants clustered in one of three groups (categories): those who were thriving, surviving or languishing in regard to the challenge of the geographically dislocating transition.

Thriving was further examined in relation to a theoretical framework of transition as a cyclical process. This was explained as a dynamic exchange across stages of transition, rather than as a standard linear model. While the transition was recursive, the stages were disjunctive and at the same time interconnected. Thriving explained by this model required the resolution of tasks associated with the concepts at each stage. For each of the categories the concepts were the

same however the resolution of the associated tasks was more problematic. The recursive process of learning gave the thriving participants a significant advantage. They had a positive trajectory on the thriving transition cycle and their ability to progress was enhanced by the satisfactory resolution of issues at each stage of the challenge. Those whose tasks were poorly resolved or unresolved were less able to thrive as the transition unfolded. This study provided new insights into the characteristics and processes of thriving in a geographically dislocating transition. Thriving was observed as a cyclic, staged process where the trajectories of passage, and adjustment strategies, exerted a significant influence on the outcomes.

To advance the learnings from this research and to broaden the application of possible interventions, the direction of future research should extend the methodology to other groups in transition, and to a wider range of transition challenges.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The current study examined the personal characteristics and processes of young men who thrive in periods of geographically dislocating transitions. The study was designed to provide an understanding of the positive characteristics and processes of these transitions. The selection of the group young men was designed to provide a cohort of comparable individuals who were experiencing a similar transition rather than to imply characteristics specific to the gender or age-group.

Geographically dislocating transitions are regarded as potentially disruptive and disconnecting, with a high risk for poor health outcomes (Brim Jnr & Ryff, 1980; 1984; Pearlin, 1980; Schlossberg, 1984). However the potential for growth, learning and development is also a possible consideration, but not yet well understood (Carver, 1998; Ickovics & Park, 1998; Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005). Consequently, this study investigated the experiences of individuals negotiating a geographically dislocating transition, and identified the personal characteristics that contributed to positive outcomes. The study then identified 16 broad concepts that captured the experience of negotiating the geographically dislocating transition, as well as the categories of individuals (i.e. who thrived, survived or languished) according to those concepts. This study also identified the staged processes of transition associated with the negotiation of the challenge of dislocation.

1.0 Dislocating transitions

The difficulties associated with the successful negotiation of transitions have been the subject of investigation for some time, but the types and foci of research are diverse, ranging from a stage theory, including age-based processes (e.g.

Levinson, 1978), life event frameworks (e.g. Brim Jnr & Ryff, 1980; Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974), or issues based events (e.g. Brett, Stroh, & Reilly, 1993; Mendenhall, Kuhlman, Stahl, & Osland, 2002). The thrust of this earlier research was to describe development through the lifespan or through particular events. Implied in this research was a search for a better understanding of the process of the transition 'well resolved', and the thinking associated with the perceptions of stressors and problem-solving strategies (Hobfoll, 1998; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

In the past, the ability of an individual to negotiate the challenging transition was often pathologised (e.g. Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; McCrae, 1984) with the focus on the coping process. However, there has been growing interest in a more positive approach based on research in positive psychology (Seligman, 1991), a sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987), psychological well-being (Keyes & Magyar-Moe, 2003; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2006) and resilience (e.g. Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Kumpfer, 1999; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 2000). As yet, relatively little is known about the positive outcomes of adapting to challenging circumstances and the underlying processes that allow individuals to do well.

The construct of thriving has grown out of the study of resilience and is concerned with adaptive recovery that includes a positive response to challenging circumstances (Carver, 1998); health rather than disease (Ickovics & Park, 1998; Keyes, 2002); and particularly a focus on growth and learning (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995; Park, 1998; Spreitzer et al., 2005).

For this study, geographic dislocation provided the contextual challenge to examine the characteristics and processes of thriving.

1.1 Statement of the problem

For many young men recruited to the Australian Football League (AFL) from interstate, resolving the challenges of relocation can be problematic. Despite the public acclaim, the high levels of motivation and the large investment, the failure rate for recruits is high. Less than 30% of players drafted to the AFL succeed using the criteria applied by the AFL clubs (i.e. playing 50 games and/or spending four years with the club). While the transition is complex, the difficulties are more acutely felt by those geographically dislocated, where approximately ⅔ of players failing to meet AFL club expectations are from geographically dislocated backgrounds (see Appendix A, 'AFL data').

The concept of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation was not well understood and the personal characteristics and processes of individuals making positive transitions remained unclear. This study provided a new understanding of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation.

1.2 The research question and purpose of the study

The study sought to answer the following research question: 'what are the personal characteristics and processes of young men who thrive in periods of geographical dislocation?'

The purpose of this study was (a) to analyse the characteristics of thriving and to more clearly define what it means to thrive in challenging circumstances; and (b) to examine and describe the processes of thriving where there is geographic dislocation, i.e. where the challenging transition takes the individual away from the familiar to the unfamiliar. What was not clear was an understanding of the particular processes and contributing characteristics that might allow an individual to thrive.

1.3 Conceptual assumptions

As a mixed methods approach, the research employed both deductive and inductive research strategies, where selected instruments contributed to an understanding of the nature of the cohort, and where deeper understanding of the characteristics and processes of thriving was available through an inductive exploration of the data. The partially mixed, sequential study design (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2006) provided the structure that addressed the research objectives, purpose and question. The underlying pragmatist philosophical position provided a middle ground, philosophically and methodologically (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) to provide a practical and outcome-oriented response to the research question.

1.4 Rationale and theoretical framework

1.4.1 Transitions

This thesis has drawn on the work of Schlossberg (1989), Bridges (2004), Selder (1989), and Nicholson (1984; 1987) in particular. Schlossberg (1989) regarded the impact of a transition as the product of the characteristics of the individual, the characteristics of the pre-transition/post-transition environments, and the adaptive processes in which the individual engages as a result of his/her perceptions of the particular transition. The temporal aspects of change and renewal, and the need for individuals to feel connected to their surroundings and to master their immediate environment are central to this conceptualisation. Bridges (2004) proposed that the negotiation of a transition begins with the disruption and abandonment of old patterns, leading to a period of uncertainty, and then a new beginning. It required a commitment to the transition that allowed a shift from the 'old to the new'. Selder's (1989) 'life transition theory' involved the 'bridge' from a reality that has been disrupted to a newly constructed or surfacing reality. Some transitions were understood and negotiated using the

resources available to the individual; other transitions fell into the area of uncertainty and required the bridging to reduce uncertainty and regain the 'integrity of the self' (Selder, 1989). Similarly, Meleis, Sawyer, Im, Messias and Schumacher (2000) proposed the journey from one life condition to another as a conceptual framework. They described the essential properties of transitions as awareness, engagement, the nature of the change, the time span involved, and the critical moments involved. Further, the transition conditions involved the personal, community and societal conditions attached to the transition (Meleis et al., 2000).

Nicholson (1987) contributed a cyclic process of transition across four stages (i.e. preparation, encounter, adjustment and stability), using three guiding principles where transitions had (a) recursive qualities with one stage leading to the next through the cycle; (b) disjunctive qualities/characteristics at each stage; (c) interdependent and dynamic antecedent qualities with one stage leading to and defining the next. This provided a more dynamic and detailed framework for the examination of the transition process.

Consistent with the literature, geographically dislocating transitions provided a passage from one condition to another (e.g. Chick & Meleis, 1986) and the individual experiences and multiple dimensions of these transitions were the subject of this research.

1.4.2 Thriving

Thriving is a positive response to a challenge (Carver, 1998) where gain occurs, rather than the minimisation of loss (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995). By contrast, resilience is the maintenance or regaining of positive functioning following exposure to risk in very adverse circumstances (e.g. Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Kumpfer, 1999; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1979; Werner, 1984).

Thriving involves challenging circumstances that are sufficiently destabilising to require the individual to re-examine the self (Spreitzer et al., 2005), but at the same time provides the means through which the individual is motivated to function at a higher level.

Generally, an individual who thrives displays four features: they (a) learn from the experience, (b) develop confidence, (c) strengthen their support networks, and (d) master new strategies (Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001; Ickovics & Park, 1998; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995).

1.4.3 Geographic dislocation

Geographic dislocation is a potentially disruptive transition event with a high risk of poor health outcomes (Brim Jnr & Ryff, 1980; Martin, 1999). Moving away from a familiar setting to an unfamiliar setting can be a stressful event, especially when it involves job change and an accompanying requirement to relocate (Brett, Stroh, & Reilly, 1992; Luo & Cooper, 1990; Meleis et al., 2000; Moyle & Parkes, 1999; Munton, Forster, Altman, & Greenbury, 1993). The associated disconnection and difficulties (e.g. poor outcomes associated with role change, and instability as a result of the interruption of the familiar) have been described in a range of settings, e.g. career change (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Brett et al., 1992), educational settings (Ballantyne, 2000; Evans, 2000), and expatriate settings (Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006). Fisher and Hood (1987) in a study of students moving to university, describe a loss of control that leads to anxiety, and perceived helplessness through the overwhelming nature of the new environment. The emerging, overarching principles that promoted positive outcomes include (a) the personal factors (e.g. the levels of control able to be exercised, the fit with the new environment and connections with the old environment); (b) personality (e.g. particularly

individuals high in extraversion and low in neuroticism); and (c) circumstance (e.g. distance from home, home background and life history).

While there has been broad description of the difficulties faced in periods of geographical dislocation, the particular characteristics and processes were not known. This gap in understanding was addressed in the current study.

1.5 Thriving in geographically dislocating transitions

The literature described a number of transition types including developmental and situational (e.g. Chick & Meleis, 1986); vocational relocation (e.g. Fisher, 1990b; Mendenhall et al., 2002; Tinto, 1993), and role transition where there had been removal from the familiar and exposure to the unfamiliar (e.g. Nicholson, 1987; Nicholson & West, 1988).

Geographic dislocation is regarded as a move away from the familiar environment and support systems, to an unfamiliar environment and new systems. The associated challenges and stresses have been described (e.g. Brett et al., 1992; Luo & Cooper, 1990; Martin, 1999; Munton et al., 1993), however the characteristics and processes associated with success, or thriving, are not well known.

There is a health and well-being advantage when a geographically dislocating transition has been successfully negotiated, especially when individuals begin to thrive in the new environment. Further there is a human resource and organisational advantage to organisations (e.g. Ballantyne, 2000; Gustafson, 2001; Ryff, 1989; Schlossberg, 1984).

The research problem was to design an investigation that would accurately and clearly (a) examine and define the *characteristics* of thriving in geographically

dislocating, challenging circumstances; and (b) analyse and explain the *process* of thriving where there is geographic dislocation.

This study allowed the examination of the experience of a geographically dislocating transition through a mixed methods approach. A group of valid and reliable instruments was selected to establish the nature of the participant group and an understanding of their shared characteristics. This base of understanding allowed a more focussed approach for the acquisition of data through in-depth semi-structured interviews, to examine the participant group in regard to their geographically dislocating transition experiences.

1.6 Importance of the study

The present study was designed to make a number of contributions to an understanding of the positive aspects of geographically dislocating transitions and inform potential interventions. The research identified those personal characteristics that augur well for a successful transition in geographically dislocating circumstances. This study was also designed to provide insights into the particular processes of navigating and negotiating geographically dislocating transitions. This knowledge was important to a more comprehensive understanding of the cyclic nature of transitions; and of thriving in those circumstances. Previous research in this area had focused on the role transitions associated with employment mobility (e.g. Nicholson, 1984), or the lifespan issues (e.g. Schlossberg, 1989) and a broad framework for change. Consequently, little was known about the particular problems, resource requirements and coping processes that allow individuals to thrive in these circumstances. This research also contributed to that understanding and provides clear information on the particular trajectories for positive transitions.

1.7 Definition and explanation of terms

(a) *Thriving* was defined as a response to a challenge where the individual effectively mobilised individual and social resources, leading to enhanced recovery potential, and higher levels of achievement and strength through learning (Carver, 1998; Ickovics & Park, 1998). Thriving was regarded as a subjective experience where self-regulation was more than a response to goal setting and reward, and extended to the trajectories of confidence dealing with a particular challenge (Porath & Bateman, 2006; Spreitzer et al., 2005); and a sense of mastery and strengthened personal relations (Carver & Scheier, 1998a).

(b) *Transition* was defined as a passage from one life phase, condition, or status to another that embraced the elements of process, time and perception (Chick & Meleis, 1986). It was a period of perceived change characterised by disconnectedness from usual social networks and social support systems, temporary loss of familiar reference points of significant objects or subjects, new needs that may arise or old ones not met in familiar ways, and old sets of expectations no longer congruent with changing situations (Schlossberg, 1989; Selder, 1989).

More specifically, Nicholson (1984) described work-role transitions as any change in employment status and any change in job content, including all instances of 'status passages', forms of intra- and inter-organisational mobility, and other changes in employment status. However, the consistent themes were time, perceived change and disconnectedness where the disruption of a reality necessitated reorganisation or reconstructing the existing one.

(c) *Geographic dislocation* was the disconnection associated with a physical move away from a familiar location to an unfamiliar one, and the loss of familiar

support systems. Geographic dislocation was generally regarded as a negative experience that was de-stabilising and stressful (Brett et al., 1992; 1993). It was a challenging experience that required the individual to re-evaluate the 'self' and the resources that might be facilitative (Rogers & Rogers, 2000).

1.8 Scope and limitations

The research was conducted in the context of the Australian Football League and has focused on the experiences of 24 young, male recruits selected (i.e. 'drafted') to play at 2 of 16 clubs. The particular requirements of this context ensured that all the recruits were elite athletes (i.e. in total, approximately 60 recruits are drafted from a pool of 2500 aspirants each year), and entered into a very demanding and different world to the one from which they came. The research did not focus on athletic ability or potential, but rather on the elements of geographic dislocation, and the processes of successful negotiation of the transition that were shared among the participants. Consequently, the research is also relevant for individuals in dislocating moves away from familiar environments, and the organisations who foster them.

1.9 Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature that underpinned the current understanding of thriving, geographic dislocation, and the transitions involved in the movement from one environment to another. Chapter 2 also reviews the literature associated with an understanding of the nature of the participant group, particularly those characteristics that might have contributed to a capacity to thrive. Consequently, the chapter provides an understanding of the constructs that contributed to the current understanding of the personal characteristics and processes of thriving; and the transition process as a contextual exploration of thriving.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology and methods undertaken in this study. This chapter provides an overview of the researcher's philosophical position and the decision-making parameters that guided the investigation. This chapter explains the mixed method approach and the associated strategies; outlines the particular strategies employed to identify and recruit the participants, and the processes involved in the gathering, organisation and analysis of data. These include a group of valid and reliable instruments used to determine the nature of the participant group; and semi-structured interviews designed to gather the participants' experience of the geographically dislocating transition. This chapter provides a full description of the interview guide and the instruments employed to gather data to examine the nature of the participant group.

Chapter 4 reports on the findings of this study and provides a detailed description of the mixed method outcomes. The first section of this chapter reports the findings through the application of the selected instruments and their indications of the homogeneity of the participant group. The second part of this chapter reports the interview data and the processes used to construct the narrative data into themes, and subsequently into concepts. Further it reports on the extraction of categories from the concept data and the implications for discussion.

Chapter 5 reports on the discussion of the main findings from the study and reflects on the supporting literature. The first part of this chapter discusses the research question in regard to the characteristics of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation. The second part of the chapter extends these findings to a discussion of the process of thriving as an expression of transition, and thereby provides new directions for the consideration of thriving in a particular context.

Chapter 6 provides a summary and conclusion that revisits the findings from this study, and deliberates on the implications for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter a justification for the research and proposed strategies to answer the research question were described. This chapter provides a summary of the literature related to thriving, transition and the selected theories of transition, and of geographical dislocation as a contextual condition for the examination of the process of thriving.

2.0 Understanding geographic dislocation

To date, an understanding of the experience of a geographical dislocation has not been well developed, with most literature situated in the context of a broader examination of change. However, the present general consensus has been that geographic dislocation is a negative experience that threatens self-esteem (Carnall, 1990), destabilises role definition (Ashford, 1988), and gives rise to stress in regard to the loss of control and uncertainty (Brett et al., 1992; 1993). The personal aspects of individual experiences of geographically dislocating transitions are difficult to describe because of the individual meaning attached to change (Fisher, 1990d), but implications for well-being are clear (Ryff, 1989). When the transition is poorly resolved, the potential for longer term difficulties are high (Munton & West, 1995; Munton et al., 1993) and personal adjustment issues persist (Forster, 1990).

There has been complementary research in the area of career change, particularly in the area of job transfer and occupational relocation (e.g. Black & Ashford, 1995; Martin, 1999; Munton et al., 1993; 1988). While the combination of job relocation and geographic dislocation was regarded as significant (Nicholson & West, 1988), the impact of career change was often tempered by a

willingness to relocate (Brett & Reilly, 1988), and career attributes (Meyer & Allen, 1984). In contrast, the impact of geographic dislocation was often pervasive and added to the distress of job relocation (Luo & Cooper, 1990) and limited the capacity to adjust to the expectations of the new environment (e.g. Carter, 1999b; Louis, 1980b).

Other research acknowledged the potential of the challenging circumstances to provide an environment where individuals could thrive (Carver, 1998; O'Leary, 1998). The processes that allowed individuals to thrive have been identified as the effective mobilisation and application of resources, and planning of appropriate responses (Ashford, 1988). It also involved meaningful engagement, learning and growth; especially where a frame of reference was developed in response to the challenging circumstances (Carver, 1998; Ickovics & Park, 1998; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Nevertheless the circumstances and processes that allowed an individual to thrive were not clearly described.

The work of Schlossberg (1989) provided the clearest indication of these forces in action, where the impact of a geographically dislocating transition was a factor of the 'fit' with the individual's situation and stage of development. Consequently it was a product of (a) the characteristics of the individual experiencing the transition, (b) the characteristics of the dislocating experience, and (c) the characteristics of the transition. These three conceptions are considered below.

2.1 The characteristics of the individual

Schlossberg's (1989) work suggested that there are key personal characteristics that contribute to the negotiation of the challenging transition. A review of the informing literature indicated that the salient characteristics included (a) general personality traits that bolster the individual against the impact of the challenging circumstances (e.g. Costa & McCrae, 1998; McCrae & Costa, 1986; Ones &

Viswesvaren, 1999), (b) the psychological well-being of the individual (e.g. Masten et al., 2004; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995; Ryff & Essex, 1992), and (c) their value orientation (e.g. Antonovsky, 1987; Pallant & Lae, 2002; Strauser & Lustig, 2003). These characteristics inform the potential capacity to negotiate a challenging transition, and also link to notions of thriving in those challenging circumstances (e.g. O'Leary, 1998; Park, 1998). These related constructs and the links to thriving are illustrated in Table 2.1 below.

Thriving	Related concept	Related construct characteristics	Key linking authors
Thriving focuses on the fostering of personal agency. Personality traits that pre-dispose individuals to particular coping strategies are of interest. Thriving draws from this broader understanding of coping, particularly where learning provides a frame of reference for future strategies.	General personality	Personality is a set of traits or characteristics that distinguishes one person from another. The behaviours of an individual in response to a challenge can to some extent be understood by dispositional traits.	(Costa & McCrae, 1998; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Frydenberg, 2004; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; McCrae & Costa, 1986; Selye, 1956; Snyder, 1999b)
Thriving captures many of the features of well-being; self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, but has a particular emphasis on personal growth and learning and a more eudemonic appraisal of doing well.	Subjective well-being	Subjective well-being captures a number of the elements of thriving. Focus on the judgement of the overall positive condition and a condition of 'happiness'.	(Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997; Keyes & Magyar-Moe, 2003; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 1996)
While thriving draws from the individual components: (meaningfulness, manageability and comprehensibility) and their applied learning, it is less concerned with a sense of coherence as an outcome measure.	Sense of coherence	A sense of coherence describes a personal orientation that provides a platform for adaptive coping. Particularly, finding meaningfulness, manageability and comprehensibility in overcoming a challenge.	(Antonovsky, 1987, 1996, 1998; Pallant & Lae, 2002; Strauser & Lustig, 2003)

Table 2.1 Thriving and related concepts

In this study, these defining characteristics were examined through a process that identified and profiled the nature of the participant group using a number of valid and reliable instruments.

2.1.1 General personality

Personality is a set of traits or characteristics that distinguishes one person from another (Costa & McCrae, 1998). Characteristics are usually compared to others rather than within a particular individual, and consequently it was possible to identify similarities and differences within the participant group.

The NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992) scale provided a measure of general personality across five domains: i.e. (a) neuroticism, (b) extraversion, (c) openness, (d) agreeableness, and (d) conscientiousness. This general description of personality provided a broad profile of each of the individuals in the participant group, and a collective understanding of the nature of the participant group in regard to the five domains.

While personality measures make assumptions that individuals are behaviourally consistent across situations, predictions of behaviour remain problematic (Lazarus & Launier, 1978; Moos, 1974). Negotiating transitions has also been associated with various personality characteristics or orientations (Fisher & Cooper, 1990c) and researchers (e.g. Carver, 1998; McCrae & Costa, 1986) have suggested a link between personality and the success of coping strategies, so the ability of the participants to respond effectively was determined by the interpretation of the challenging circumstances. Selye (1987) described the affirmative aspects of coping (eustress) as the result of a positive perception of a stressor, however productive coping and the fostering of personal agency towards thriving is a more recent development (Carver, 1998; Frydenberg & Lewis, 1997).

2.1.2 Psychological well-being

The ability of the individual to thrive has been described as a component of positive psychological functioning (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2003), and

consequently an understanding of well-being was important to the investigation. The Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB) (Ryff, 1989) provided another component of understanding to describe the nature of the participant group, particularly in regard to the subset of well-being factors that contributed to a multidimensional model (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The usefulness of the SPWB model lay in its ability to inform an understanding of individuals in the participant group across a number of domains, pertinent to the challenge of the dislocating transition (Fisher, 1990d; Kwan, Ryff, Love, & Essex, 2001; Smider, Essex, & Ryff, 1996). The SPWB was able to describe the participant group in regard to their:

1. Positive relations with others: where empathy, close ties with others and intimacy provided the structure for trusting interpersonal relationships.
2. Autonomy: where independence, self-determination and an internal locus of evaluation provided a sense of freedom for thought and action.
3. Environmental mastery: where creative and selective control governed the extent to which the participant could identify and use resources to manipulate complex environments.
4. Purpose in life: where meaningfulness and a clear purpose provided a sense of direction for the future.
5. Self acceptance: where a platform for mental health and well-being was created through acceptance of the past and the multi-dimensional aspects of self.
6. Personal growth: where personal growth through their openness to experience and the confronting of challenges, provided the opportunity to thrive.

Smider, Essex and Ryff (1996) proposed that where a transition, particularly involving geographic dislocation, involved the abandonment of the familiar "... a number of such pre-existing resources are likely to be engaged during the transition" (p. 363). Smider et al. (1996) reported that environmental mastery and autonomy, two of the identified components of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995), buffered the individual against the emotional difficulties (sadness and aggravation) of a transition. While some research has focused on factors related to decisions involved in geographic relocation (Henretta, 1986; Speare & Meyer, 1988), less has been documented about the process of psychological adaptation.

Consistent with Schlossberg's (1989) proposal that the impact of the transition was related to the characteristics of the individual experiencing the transition, the determination of their psychological well-being was a "...function of what the individual brings to the event as well as the context in which it occurs" (Smider et al., 1996, p. 369). Consequently there was interest in the individual and group performance on this testing instrument; particularly in regard to the potentially discriminating aspects of psychological well-being and the process of thriving in periods of geographically dislocating transitions.

2.1.3 A sense of coherence

Schlossberg (1989) made particular reference to the importance of the individual's value orientation, i.e. their ability to adapt to the transition. Some early research (e.g. Thurnher, 1975) had explored this concept in terms of a value system. A more particular focus on the individual's orientation to life was possible through the application of the Orientation to Life questionnaire, described as their Sense of Coherence (SOC) (Antonovsky, 1993). An individual's global orientation provided a marker for their capacity to engage meaningfully with the tasks associated with the challenge of geographic

dislocation. The SOC was conceived as a personal orientation comprised of three factors:

(a) Comprehensibility: sense making of internal and external stimuli;

(b) Manageability: access to adequate resources to meet the demands of the stimuli; and

(c) Meaningfulness: where the demands are worthy of emotional investment and commitment.

Although the subsets of this dispositional orientation are intertwined rather than separately measurable, Antonovsky (1987) described 'meaningfulness' as the most crucial of the three dimensions and the key to a sustained and committed engagement. The SOC has subsequently been described as an explanatory model for the maintenance and improvement of health (Antonovsky, 1990a, 1990b). For example, an individual with a strong SOC is able to select and access the appropriate 'generalised resistance resources' (e.g. positive self-esteem), to meet the demands of the stressor and to allow the modification of behaviour when the stressor is engaged. Antonovsky (1979) described this 'sense of coherence' as finding an acceptable level of meaning to engage with a comprehensible and manageable challenge. In this view, the SOC is "...a relatively stable (trait) measure, showing some degree of (state) variability when a person is faced with a drastic life event" (Schnyder, Büchi, Sensky, & Klaghofer, 2000, p. 297).

Those individuals with a high SOC see stressors as predictable and explicable and are confident in their ability to overcome them. They assess a particular situation and consider the resources they need to cope and their ability to mobilise those resources in response. The SOC model proposed that the

outcome of exposure to a stressor is not necessarily negative, but embedded in the dynamic process that seeks to restore equilibrium (Antonovsky, 1993).

Similarly, thriving requires the "...effective mobilization of individual and social resources" (Ickovics & Park, 1998, p. 237) to enable an individual to rise to a challenge and achieve growth and well-being. This is achieved by the individual being able to understand the challenge, take stock of the available resources and measure what is required, and to make meaning in the engagement.

Consequently there was interest in the participants' Sense of Coherence score to provide awareness of the participants' global orientation, and a position to explore the processes of thriving in periods of geographically dislocating transitions.

2.1.4 Summary

Thriving was consistent with the concept of well-being in the context of challenging circumstance, e.g. Ryff's (1989) view of personal growth and positive outcomes of well-being, where individuals who thrive had a sense of their own potential (Ryff, 1989), a sense of environmental mastery (Ryff & Singer, 1996), but apply these understandings to increasing personal growth and vigour (Carver, 1998; O'Leary, 1998; Ryff & Singer, 2003). Similarly, the capacity to thrive was consistent with Antonovsky's (1987) Sense of Coherence (SOC) where a strong SOC equipped the individual with a world view where a challenge is comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful.

2.2 The dislocating experience

Schlossberg's (1989) model for analysing human adaptation to transition included (a) the interpersonal support systems, (b) institutional supports, and (c) the physical setting. Relocation literature has generally focused on the factors that affect adjustment after appraisal of relocation stress. Brett, Stroh and Reilly (1992; 1993) for example, explored a theoretical perspective suggesting that relocation stress was reduced by reasserting control and reducing uncertainty. In that regard, the greater the chaos and disruption of routines, the greater the resultant uncertainty and the longer it takes to adjust. As a consequence the high levels of role novelty, role ambiguity and work environment novelty throughout the relocation will increase uncertainty (Nicholson, 1990; Nicholson & West, 1988).

Relocating to a new environment and new community presents both challenges and opportunities. Regardless of whether the transition is desired or undesired, there is often confusion and pre-occupation with the characteristics of the new environment and the loss of the old one (Burke, 1988; Moyle & Parkes, 1999; Munton et al., 1993; Nicholson, 1990). A considerable amount of the research on geographically dislocated transitions has been focussed on the military and expatriate communities. This research has indicated that the relocation experience, while stressful and challenging, is not necessarily negative. In fact some individuals learn what is required to thrive and to 'make sense' of the experience (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Weber & Weber, 2005). The expatriate literature also claimed that interpersonal skills (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991) and certain stable personality traits contributed to effective relocation (Ones & Viswesvaren, 1999; Shaffer et al., 2006).

The consistent thread of the research is the movement 'from the familiar to the unfamiliar', the disruption of routines, and the psychological uncertainty. In this

regard it was important to reduce the uncertainty, especially in regard to the unfamiliar behaviours and requirements of the new setting, and when old behaviours were considered inappropriate or inadequate.

Another thread of literature came from studies of homesickness and the association between life events and disorder (e.g. Fisher, 1989). Whether the moving experience was unpleasant and imposed, or interesting and novel, the stressful nature of geographically dislocating transitions remained. There was some evidence that previous experience of change buffers against adverse reactions (e.g. Fisher & Hood, 1988; Jones, 1986; Nicholson, 1984), particularly in regard to the context and personal meaning attached to the transition. It was also claimed that "...willingness to relocate for career enhancement... is mainly a function of individual and family characteristics" (Landau, Shamir, & Arthur, 1992, p. 679).

The specific nature of the experience depended on the frame of reference held by the participant and the expectations associated with the move (Noe & Barber, 1993). The stresses associated with the dislocation were contextual, particularly with the changes in social networks (Forster, 1990; Munton & West, 1995), and the perceived loss of environmental mastery (Myerson, 1991; Ryff, 1989). The relocation of home and workplace and the consequent dislocation "... can lead to feelings of depression and frustration because it can be difficult to decide how to deal with these changes".(Carnall, 1990, p. 143).

2.2.1 The contextual dislocation

Success at the elite level of the AFL is measured in terms of longevity, either in games played or years of service. Despite the time, effort and expense attached to the trade and draft process, the return for the investment is low. Many club officials regularly despair at the process, indicating that there is:

"...just too much crystal-balling. We've done our own analysis on it but if you look at the players and their average games, from my point of view it's ridiculous. You're going to have an early pick and you're not guaranteed a bloke's going to play more than 30 games. It's just crazy." (Roos, 2007).

Over the past 21years, the criteria for success have been described as 50 games or four years at the club. On the participant clubs' criteria of a '50 game' measure, only 24.8% have reached the marker and 75.2% have failed to thrive, and two-thirds of these are identified as 'geographically dislocated'. If a 100 games test is applied, only 10.9% of players have achieved this marker and 89.1% have failed to thrive and, more alarmingly, 17.6% have never played a game (see Appendix A). On the participant clubs' criterion of success of 'four years at the club' (including those awaiting contracts), only 28.6% had reached a marker. These players had been able to negotiate the tasks of the transition and were regarded as thriving in the environment. Conversely, 71.4% had failed to thrive using this criterion, and nearly three-quarters of these were identified as 'geographically dislocated' (See Appendix A).

Of the 24 dislocated individuals in the participant group, and using the criteria of playing four years or more and reaching 50 games as measures of success, only 10 had achieved the milestones (see Table 2.2 below).

Player	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
pick	21	R	13	17	11	PS	R	PS	55	64	PS	33
games	95	0	120	23	168	167	10	135	71	8	26	41
years	6	3	6	3	9	7	3	6	4	3	3	2
entry	2002	2004	2002	2005	1999	2001	2001	2000	2004	1998	2003	2005

Player	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
pick	61	PS	44	45	56	R	3	33	18	R	73	22
games	44	54	33	55	36	32	59	54	16	31	91	41
years	4	6	4	3	2	4	5	4	3	3	9	7
entry	2004	2000	2004	2005	2006	2004	2003	2004	2005	2005	1998	2001

Table 2.2 **AFL participant statistics**

This crude measure drives the club's strategic development plan, but takes no account of the stages of transition and the range of strategies that might be available to assist players to thrive rather than languish in the face of the challenge.

The participant group were immersed in a setting removed from traditional support systems. Recruits become eligible for the draft at 17 years of age and most are drafted before the age of 20. Most draftees nominate for the draft with limited preparation in regard to the special features associated with the reality of a career in the AFL (Noblet, 2002, 2003). The participant group were similar and were a group of motivated, enthusiastic young men with common goals and aspirations; and placed in relatively ideal circumstances that should have allowed them to thrive. Despite these circumstances the outcomes were disparate and were not explained by conventional measures. The dislocating transition was the defining challenge in this investigation, and it provided the contextual environment for the identification of characteristics and processes that informed an understanding of thriving in those challenging circumstances.

2.3 The nature of the transition

The complex nature of an individual's experience required an integrated approach to provide an understanding of the transition process. Much of the literature had focussed on the problems associated with change, and on the disequilibrium created in the disturbance of settled patterns. Less information was available in regard to transitions 'well resolved' or to the personal characteristics of individuals who manage change well. Transitions had been described in a number of contexts, principally (a) as a universal transition involving lifespan development; (b) involving a work role change; and (c) where there has been geographic dislocation, particularly relocation transfers.

Life-span development has been the focus of a large section of transition research, including age-linked developmental periods (e.g. Levinson, 1978). Neugarten (1979) and Valliant (1977) described a more diverse process, with complexity increasing through the life-span; and Lowenthal et al. (1975) proposed a life-stage transition rather than an age-limited process. Others (e.g. Baltes & Baltes, 1990) suggested that there are transactional milestones that give shape and direction to a life trajectory, but these were not pre-determined. The emerging understanding was that developmental transitions, particularly those transitions from adolescence to adulthood, had great potential to shape responses as individuals became more organised (Sameroff, 2000); and that the social contexts and 'scaffolding' could influence the direction of these transitions and allow individuals to thrive (Masten et al., 2004).

The research on transition had also explored the adjustment of employees to new organisational settings. The findings indicated that the positive experiences from one setting would facilitate the next one (e.g. Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Black et al., 1991; Munton & West, 1995; Nicholson, 1984), but with the caveat that repeated transfers would not necessarily facilitate change (Pinder & Schroeder, 1987). Other research suggested that the success of retirement transitions from elite sport was dependent upon an understanding of the transition process (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Baillie, 1993; Stephan, Bilard, Ninot, & Delignieres, 2003; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1998).

Further research has examined group moves (e.g. Carter, 1999b; Munton & West, 1995), career moves (e.g. Carter, 1999a; Louis, 1980a), and the transitions to new work/study environments, especially the transition to university (Fisher, 1989; Fisher & Cooper, 1990c; Jackson, Pancer, Pratt, & Hunsberger, 2000). The difficulties were often described as the disparity between

expectations and the experience, and thriving was often a factor of good preparation and a trajectory that was positive and optimistic.

Another focus for transition had emerged from role theory (Biddle, 1979; Ebaugh, 1988), where behaviours were patterned on contexts, shared identities, expectations and the larger social systems. Role theory offered a potential explanation for the variety of transitions where socialisation underpins the development of skills to master and perform the new roles effectively. The socialisation process required those in transition to draw meaning (or sense) from the experience. In that regard sense-making is succinctly described in Louis (1980a) as an important process to "...revise the cognitive maps that they use to interpret and describe experiences in the new role and setting" (p. 337). Louis (1980b) described the transition in terms of three constructs (a) change between the old and the new, (b) contrast in the internal frame of reference for the change, and (c) the surprise in the difference between the expectations and the reality. Murray (1998, p. 106) says that "...social behavior... is a dynamic perspective which allows a considerable range of variability among individuals enacting the same role" and that the levels associated with the roles were a product of the social position that validates membership of that group, the normative expectations of someone in that role in the given circumstances, and the associated behaviours.

2.3.1 Summary

Transitions can be viewed as a role shift, or as a boundary crossing and status transformation (Allen & Van de Vliert, 1984) where there is "... an event... resulting in changes in individual psychosocial assumptions concerning oneself or one's organisational environment, social environment, or one's relation to one's environment" (Murray, 1998, p. 107).

In many cases, a transition would also involve trust. Trust is often described as a 'willingness to be vulnerable' (e.g. Clark & Payne, 1997; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995) and, in the context of this study, it was the willingness to dislocate from the home environment and familiar support systems. This commitment to the future involved an understanding of the transition and an investment in the stages of transition as trustworthy (Mayer et al., 1995).

Specific theories of transition had emerged from a wide range of research areas such as change management (Bridges, 1980, 1986, 1995), counselling psychology (Schlossberg, 1984, 1989), nursing (Meleis et al., 2000; Selder, 1989), occupational psychology (Williams, 1999a, 1999b), and human resource management (e.g. Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Nicholson, 1984, 1987, 1990; Nicholson & West, 1988). Taken together, this combined literature can inform an understanding of the stages and requirements of negotiating a transition. However a more detailed analysis of the particular characteristics and processes was still required.

2.3.2 Selected theories of transition

Ashford & Taylor (1990) described an interactive process between the individual and the organisation where "... individuals learn, negotiate, enact, and maintain the behaviors appropriate to a given organizational environment... to achieve valued goals" (p. 4).

This adaption required individuals to (a) make sense of the challenge and identify the demands and constraints involved, (b) decide on the required changes to best adapt, (c) act on these decisions to adapt to the transition, and (d) manage the stresses that emerge from these negotiations.

Bridges (1986) proposed that the disruption involved in a transition was a "...psychological process that extends over a long period of time and cannot be

planned or managed by the same rational formulae that work with change" (p. 25). He contended that it is a three-part process involving the abandonment of the old patterns, a period of limbo, and a new beginning. This had also been described as the period between the 'before' and 'after' (Nortier, 1995), and expanded as a five-stage model involving initial equilibrium, a separation stage, a crisis stage characterised by confusion and reactive behaviour, a renewal or rebirth stage when behaviour is more proactive and, finally, a new period of equilibrium and stability. Nortier's (1995) separation stage involved the difficulty and confusion of applying old schemas to new situations. The individual discovered that "...doing more of the same thing... gives more and more unsatisfactory results. Not seeing, or not accepting that the reality has changed, the individual no longer understands what is happening to him" (Nortier, 1995, p. 40). The crisis phase was a more precarious period, or tipping point, where the individual was committed to the new environment and there was no turning back. This awareness of the crisis was important to the motivation to search for new meaning and to begin the process of mastery of the new environment (Bridges, 1980, 1986; Nortier, 1995; Taylor, 1989). Transitions were associated with this kind of vulnerability and exposure to the new interactions, environments and experiences, and the problems associated with poor coping strategies (Meleis et al., 2000).

Schlossberg (1989) described the importance of the individual's perception of their transition and the resources available to the individual to cope effectively with the experience. This experience was characterised by "...a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and this requires a corresponding change in one's behaviour and relationships" (Schlossberg, 1989, p. 5).

Sargent and Schlossberg (1988) also proposed that "...first, the person will see whether he or she has enough resources to get through a particular transition

successfully: and second, he or she will discover how to strengthen areas of weakness" (p. 60). This was comparable with the 'thriving' literature (e.g. Ickovics & Park, 1998; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995; Spreitzer et al., 2005) where successful adaptation was determined by the learning process rather than a passage of time. Adults were motivated to learn (and hence the ability to thrive) by their constant need to control, master, renew and take stock (Sargent & Schlossberg, 1988). From that perspective, the successful transition was a product of situational aspects including the nature of the transition (e.g. welcome, unwelcome, expected, unexpected), aspects of self including dispositional factors, previous experiences, openness to experience and the ability to deal with ambiguity. It would also include supports including social networks, friends and family, and the nature of that support; and strategies for coping including a plan for action and the availability of resources to cope.

Selder (1989) described transitions as a situation where there is a disruption of an existing reality that requires reconstruction, and consequently the resolution of uncertainty that "... bridges from a reality which has been disrupted to a newly constructed or surfacing reality" (p. 437). In that context, uncertainty was important, because it acknowledged the need for order and the 'leap of faith' required to bridge from the old reality to the new one; and the possibility of relinquishing aspects of self that had previously been defining. In those circumstances "...the person feels as if he were a stranger; he feels cut off from his environment and his usual connectedness with other human beings... (and) may fail to grasp what is actually occurring. They distort experiences..." (Selder, 1989, p. 438).

The consequent 'sense-making' was the individual's attempt to return to a state of equilibrium, and provided meaning to the experience and a frame of reference

to interpret and understand events in the new environment. It was the personal adjustment made towards the new role, over time.

2.3.3 Nicholson's transition cycle

Nicholson (1984) presented a interactive perspective to transitions proposing two main questions:

1. How are change and stability interrelated?
2. What is the impact of the interaction between the individuals and their social system?

The outcomes for the transitions were treated by Nicholson (1984; 1987) as 'adjustment' and included behavioural and dispositional effects, suggesting that the characteristics of individuals in transition mediate the adjustment (change/stability, individual/situational), and "... to assess the significance of the continual processes of role succession and change we need to look not just at their antecedent causes, but also at how transitions are experienced and managed and what their outcomes are" (Nicholson, 1984, p. 173).

The adjustments required in transition were described both as personal and role developments. Personal developments referred to where the change was internal, requiring adjustment of self-concepts, values and skills. Role developments referred to the individual's attempts to shape the role to suit their personal style. Nicholson (1987) described these adjustments as:

(a) **Absorption:** adjustment rested primarily on the individual and the role remains unmodified. It involved role learning, especially where sharp contrasts from previous experience appeared. Positive effect included satisfaction from learning and personal development; but possible negative effect included loss of skill and alienation through a loss of self.

(b) **Determination:** required role change to suit the individual's purpose and the individual remained relatively unchanged. Positive effect included feeling able to influence change, and negative effects were where failure was attributed to the individual and the social order had been disrupted.

(c) **Exploration:** required simultaneous change in personal and role boundaries and were seen as growth through innovation. Positive effect was success through the cycles of change, the negative effects were the confusion and anxiety associated with having lost one's way.

(d) **Replication:** required minimal adjustment to personal or role system and the fit was apparently a good one. Positive effect was a perception of stability and being valued for the skills brought to the experience and negative effect included feeling trapped and unable to innovate.

These adjustment strategies were also explored against other aspects of role transition, e.g.:

1. Role discretion (those multi-faceted goals and relationships that were shaped by the participant). Low discretion roles required conformity and thereby led to absorption or replication as outcomes, whereas high levels of discretion led to determination or exploration.

2. Novelty of role demands (similarity to previous understanding and experience). Low novelty offered little scope for change in identity or development of style and tended towards replication and determination, whereas with high novelty there was scope for change and development and was inclined to absorption and exploration.

Perceptions of discretion or novelty differed according to the observer, but the subjective experience was the most important and this research focus provided

an opportunity to explore the particular experience of geographic dislocation. To that process, Nicholson (1984, p. 179) suggested that "self-reported personal change after transition, and self-perceptions of role innovation and initiative may also be valid indicators in carefully designed survey research".

Discretion, or the degree to which content and scheduling of the transition could be determined by the individual, was significant in this study. In that regard, the uncertainty surrounding the geographic relocation (e.g. Baldridge, Eddleston, & Veiga, 2006; Kwan et al., 2001; Noblet & Gifford, 2002) impacted on the individual perceptions of discretion. The rigidity of the new environment was not necessarily a marker for a lack of discretion, and the subjective experience was important to capture (e.g. Black & Ashford, 1995; West, Nicholson, & Rees, 1987) to contribute to an understanding of thriving in these circumstances. As Black and Ashford (1995) proposed "...if the job fits the person, there may be little reason to change the job even if the person has substantial discretion to do so; whereas if the job does not fit the person, discretion may be an important predictor of job change." (p. 434)

Nicholson (1984) proposed that personal development was more likely when induction and socialisation processes were sequential and involved cumulative learning, role models, and divestiture or letting go of the past. Role development was more likely when induction and socialisation processes were random, without role models, and involved investiture or affirming identity. Prior socialisation was seen as an important process that was mediated by the person-job fit (Carr, Pearson, Vest, & Boyar, 2006), but collectively shaped the motivational orientation (thoughts, feeling, and behaviours).

Temporal shifts may have occurred as well and these would be reflected in the dynamic changes in transition outcomes (e.g. an increased focus on personal

development will shift individuals from replication towards absorption, and from determination towards exploration). The timeframe really depended on the person and the role change; and development can be seen as cyclic as new inputs delivered new demands. Similarly, motivational changes might have occurred through the experience of early success, whereas failure could de-motivate (Carver, 1998; Carver & Scheier, 1999).

Nicholson's (1984; 1987) emphasis was on the experience of transition as a passage through time from the initial point to more strategic adjustments; the synthesis of which is described in the 'transition cycle' (Nicholson, 1987, 1990). A diagrammatical description appears in Figure 2.1 below:

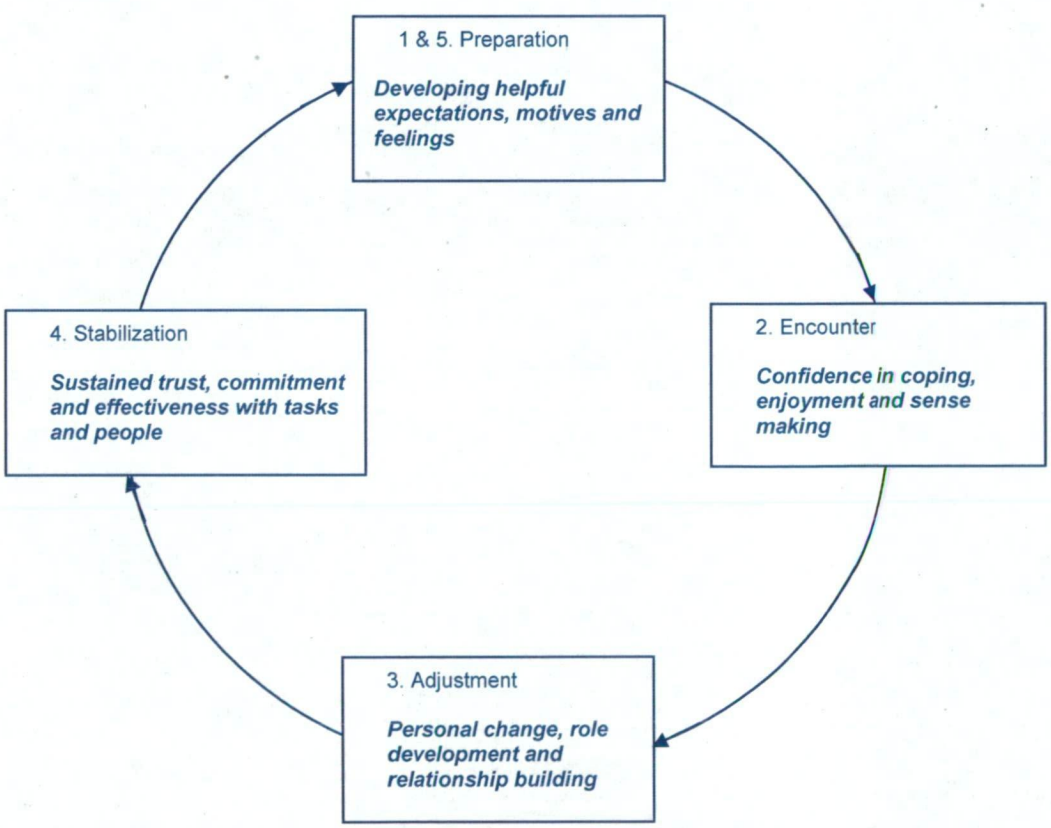

Figure 2.1 The Transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987)

Nicholson (1990) described a model that encompassed the full range of experiences rather than being normative or prescriptive, and used three guiding

principles: (a) recursion: (i.e. stage 1 is also stage 5) was the movement of the transition through the stages, leading to the next cycle of transition; (b) disjunction referred to the distinctive qualities/characteristics at each stage; (c) interdependence involved the dynamic antecedent nature of one stage leading to the next. The tasks, successfully achieved, were enabling however "... when confronting expected changes in the Preparation stage, people may feel fearful, unready and reluctant to change, sometimes disablingly so. One is equally ill-equipped in the opposite condition: when change is anticipated with exaggerated optimism and starry-eyed idealism" (Nicholson, 1990, p. 89).

Nicholson (1990) proposed that the stress of the early experience could lead to bitter regret, hostility and withdrawal; and that quitting was a legitimate response (Raelin, 1984). The adjustment phase could be tortuous with misfitting as a result of efforts, and grieving for lost opportunities or what has been given up. A poorly resolved stabilisation stage could result in poor relationships with colleagues and work tasks and the concealment of shortcomings (faking it) and consequently being trapped in an unfavourable circumstance with no obvious solutions.

The cycle metaphor was expanded when considering the particular dimensions of a transition, such as "...how fast it was turning (speed), its size and shape (amplitude and symmetry), how smooth was its action (continuity and complexity), how was it set in motion (propulsion), what helped or hindered its movement (discretion and facilitation) and where was it going (significance)" (Nicholson, 1990, p. 97). This taxonomy assisted in the understanding of the particular transition and the particular experience of the individual negotiating the transition. The nine dimensions were important, as were the intersecting dimensions and these were discussed in regard to their application to the transition in this study.

In particular, symmetry described the relative time spent on the stages of the cycle. This was affected by the characteristics of the transition (i.e. the novelty of the role, the skill requirements and work history), and translated to possible outcomes (e.g. adjustment asymmetry where there are risks of dissatisfaction in an ability to reach peak performance, but time to develop in the role). The dimensions of transition are described in Table 2.3 below:

Dimension	Description	Dilemma
Speed	How often do they occur?	Fast vs slow
Amplitude	How radical is the change?	High vs low
Symmetry	How much time adjusting vs time performing?	Long vs short
Continuity	Any meaningful connection between transitions?	High vs low
Discretion	How much autonomy in controlling the process?	High vs low
Complexity	Are multiple adaptations /adjustments required?	High vs low
Propulsion	Who started the cycle and why?	Self vs system
Facilitation	Who/what helps progress through the cycle?	High vs low
Significance	Change the individual or the organisation?	High vs low

Table 2.3 Nine dimensions of a transition (adapted from Nicholson, 1987)

This complex, comprehensive model provided a framework for the exploration of transition in four stages – preparation, encounter, adjustment and stabilisation, and to explore this experience from the organisational perspective as well as the psychosocial impact on the individual. The patterns of response contributed to a better understanding of transitions involving periods of geographic dislocation. Nevertheless, the capacity of the participant to thrive in the transition process was a more elusive proposition, and required an examination of the construct to determine its capability to capture the experience.

2.4 The development of the construct of thriving

To date, the construct of thriving has developed from the study of resilience. The concept of resilience was drawn from observations that some individuals, when

exposed to adverse circumstances, were able to demonstrate positive adaptation (Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Rutter, 1979; Werner, 1984). Rutter (1987) described resilience as the variations in the behaviour of individuals exposed to risk, but that the "...essence of the concept is that the vulnerability or protective effect is evident only in combination with the risk variable...(and that)... the search is not for factors that make us feel good but for processes that protect us against risk mechanisms" (Rutter, 1987, pp. 317-318). A summary of the relationship between resilience and thriving appears in Table 2.4 below.

Thriving	Related construct	Related construct characteristics	Key linking authors
Thriving does not require significant hardship, but can occur as a response to a challenge or challenging circumstances. The thriving focus is on the potential for learning and growth through the challenging experience.	Resilience	Capacity for positive adjustment in extreme circumstances. The focus in resilience is on recovery and the behavioural capacity to respond	(Carver, 1998; Garmezy, 1993; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1985)

Table 2.4 Thriving and resilience

While there is no universally accepted definition of resilience, it was broadly accepted that resilience involved successfully coping when faced with severe stress and hardship (Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984; Rutter, 1985, 1990; Wolin & Wolin, 1993). For example, Ryff and Singer (2003, p. 185) defined resilience as "...the capacity to either maintain or regain multiple aspects of positive psychological functioning in the face of difficult life circumstance or demanding transitions." Rutter (1990) further described resilience as "...the positive pole of the ubiquitous phenomenon of individual difference in people's responses to stress and adversity" (p. 181). While the attributable elements of the resilience process had been difficult to explain, the consensus was that the interaction with the risk variable is important (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Rutter, 1987).

Resilience was a dynamic process of recovery from adversity; and not just the absence of undesirable outcomes, but the presence of protective factors that moderate the effects of the adverse circumstances (Rutter, 1985, 1990). The internal and external resources available to the individual needed to be mobilised in a meaningful way to limit vulnerability and to enhance functional competencies (Dyer, Patsdaughter, McGuinness, O'Connor, & DeSantis, 2004). Resilience had also been associated with an absence of pathology in adverse circumstances (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993), or where stress and personality interact to enhance functional coping (Luthar & Zigler, 1991). Importantly, resilience displayed in one set of circumstances might not be repeated with a later set, and the range of resources and the ability to mobilise them affected the individual's resilience at different stages and contexts in their lives (Rutter, 1987). Kumpfer's (1999) resilience framework identified environmental and internal resources required for a resilient outcome, but the particular processes (transactional and coping) remained largely unresolved. Increasingly, resilience research had focused on an understanding of the mechanisms of positive outcomes, and the process (resilience) as opposed to the trait (resilient) characteristics (Luthar et al., 2000).

The emerging views of resilience can be described as:

(a) a compensatory model, where the exposure to risk was compensated by the existence of neutralising characteristic (Garmezy et al., 1984; Masten et al., 1988). In a seminal study, Werner and Smith (1988) described the salient characteristics of resilient youth on the island of Kauai as active problem solving, a positive outlook, the ability to enlist the support of others, and a strong belief in meaning in life.

(b) a protective factor model, where the individual's ability to meet the challenge has an indirect impact on the challenge being faced (Masten, 1989).

(c) a challenge model, where competence is bolstered by challenge which in turn provides a positive frame of reference for future challenges (Rutter, 1987); here the links to thriving are more apparent (Carver, 1998).

Over the past 20 years, the focus of resilience research has shifted from identifying individual attributes towards a better understanding of the mechanisms that lead to a better-than-expected response of some individuals to a major risk situation (Masten, 1994, 2001; Rutter, 1985, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1988). Successful adaptation despite challenging circumstances invites the exploration of what factors promote resilient behaviour (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990), and as Gordon and Song (1994) suggest, it is "... a complex of related processes that deserve to be identified and studied as discrete constructs" (p. 30).

While thriving shared the principle characteristic of resilience, (i.e. the adaptive recovery from a de-stabilising experience), there were subtle differences. In particular, thriving was a response to challenging circumstance rather than adversity, and had a focus on learning and growth, rather than recovery (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Carver (1998) described thriving as a 'better-off-afterwards' experience, however there are distinct differences to resilience. In particular, resilience was linked with the severe threat or risk of harm and adversity, whereas thriving was more concerned with circumstances that were sufficiently destabilising to require the individual to re-examine the self (Spreitzer et al., 2005), and provide the means through which individuals are motivated to function at a higher level. This is inextricably associated with the growth and learning that takes place (O'Leary, 1998; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995) where thriving was the response to a challenge, rather than the response to a threat (Carver, 1998). Bergland & Kirkevold (2001) described the concept of thriving as having physical and psychological well-being in difficult circumstances and where

an individual "...acquires new skills and/or knowledge that may promote mastery of similar situations in the future" (p. 427). It was also suggested (Carver, 1998; O'Leary, 1998; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995; Spreitzer et al., 2005) that thriving was "...the ability to go beyond the original level of psychosocial functioning" (O'Leary, 1998). Where resilience provided insights into the response of individuals exposed to serious trauma and crisis, it offered less about the challenges of change.

Carver (1998) drew the distinctions to thriving more particularly by observing that those who thrive (a) were desensitised (i.e. the challenge did not worry them so much); (b) had enhanced recovery potential (i.e. they learned new strategies); and (c) achieved at a higher level as a consequence of engagement with the challenge (i.e. they learned from the experience). In that regard, thriving included those aspects of well-being that fostered personal growth, particularly the interpretation of life experiences that gave personal meaning to the coping process (e.g. Antonovsky, 1987; Lazarus & DeLongis, 1983; Smider et al., 1996; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). Similarly the motivation to engage with the dislocating challenge was value laden and contributed to the ability of individuals to commit (Carver & Scheier, 1999; Scheier & Carver, 1985).

Thriving was a positive response to a challenge (Carver, 1998) where gain occurs, rather than the minimisation of loss (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995). This included an enhanced capacity for recovery and learning from the experience, where the individuals who thrive were motivated to function at a higher level, i.e. there was growth, understanding and motivation (Carver, 1998; Carver & Scheier, 1999). An individual who thrives (a) acquired skills and knowledge that could be applied to the next stage of a challenge (Carver & Scheier, 1999; Nicholson, 1987), (b) developed confidence making future decisions based on the reflective awareness of what worked (Aldwin & Revenson, 1987), (c)

strengthened social networks through the successful mustering of support to negotiate the challenge (Moos & Schaefer, 1986), and (d) mastered strategies to account for the disparity between expectations and experience (Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001). Consequently, thriving led to "... positive mental or physical outcomes and/or positive social outcomes" (Ickovics & Park, 1998, p. 237) through the effective mobilisation of resources.

The current construct of thriving was one that recognised the positive, adaptive processes of recovery. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) described two conditions when coping was required, i.e. when an individual is threatened or challenged. In their transactional model of coping, the emotional-focussed or problem-focussed response resulted from the character of the stressful event and the interpretation of that event in the light of available resources. The response was a combination of individual personality traits, a world view or sense of coherence, their social support system, and previous experience (Aldwin, 1994; Aldwin & Revenson, 1987; Antonovsky, 1987). In that regard, thriving was the product of individual resources, social resources and the developmental process, managed by the individual to produce positive outcomes (O'Leary, 1998); and it resulted in 'value-added' growth and enhanced well-being (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995; Park, 1998; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). This positive orientation was consistent with personal growth, where there was an expansion in capacity for well-being enhanced by self-knowledge (Spreitzer et al., 2005). O'Leary and Ickovics (1995) described engaging a challenge as transformative, in that it resulted in (a) languishing, affected by the stressor and unable to make progress; (b) surviving, that involved a return to a baseline of strategies (i.e. resilience); or (c) thriving, where growth and learning was evident.

A complementary and informing construct was goal orientation. As a component of the process of self-regulation, goal orientation guided an individual's activities

in challenging circumstances (Dweck, 1986; Zimmerman, 2001). Goal orientation has been represented as a two-dimensional construct (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996) where proving (demonstrating competence) and avoiding (avoiding negative judgements) described the experience. More recently it has been explained as a three-dimensional construct, i.e. (a) learning (achievement and skill development), (b) performance/prove (achievement and acknowledgement), and (c) performance/avoid (achievement and threat aversion) (Porath & Bateman, 2006; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997; Whinghter, Cunningham, Wang, & Burnfield, 2008).

The link to the thriving literature was where individuals learned from the challenging circumstance and felt "...progress and momentum, marked by a sense of learning (greater understanding and knowledge)" (Spreitzer et al., 2005). This was further informed by the feedback seeking/feedback action and goal orientation research, where some individuals learn and thrive and others ran the risk of maladaptive responses when faced with feedback that was broadly critical (VandeWalle, Cron, & Slocum Jr., 2001; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997).

The search for explanations into the 'better off afterwards' experience has drawn from the research into resilience, where the risk and protective factors indicated how an individual might recover from exposure to a threat or crisis (e.g. Garmezy, 1985; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 2000). The individual transactional experience has also been described (Kumpfer, 1999), where an initiating event in an environmental context led to a person-environment transactional process (e.g. perception adjustment, reframing, active coping). The internal resiliency factors (i.e. cognitive, emotional, physical, behavioural and a sense of meaning) led to a coping process which resulted in outcomes ranging from maladaptive reintegration to resilience.

The emerging construct of thriving has drawn from this learning and research has looked more closely at broader contextual circumstances (i.e. as a response to a challenge rather than a threat or crisis) and at the growth and learning that is enabling (i.e. prospering through the experience, rather than identifying resilience). The current research extends this research by identifying the particular personal characteristics and processes of thriving in a geographically dislocating transition.

2.5 Summary

A review of the literature indicated that the construct of thriving had been informed by an understanding of resilience and related constructs. The construct of thriving was the result of a move away from a vulnerability/deficit model of coping, to one that recognised the adaptive processes of recovery, particularly the role of learning and the application of acquired skills and understanding to adjustment. The literature is still growing, and while there are many threads that inform the components of the construct, less is known about the process.

The challenging circumstances that might have provided the opportunities to thrive are many and varied, however geographically dislocating transitions are an increasingly common experience in the modern world. The moves often involve dramatic changes to the recognisable environment and the absence of familiar support systems. The literature described provided a template for the examination of the characteristics of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation, and more importantly, the processes involved.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter describes the methodology and methods employed to investigate the personal characteristics and processes of young men recruited to the Australian Football League (AFL) who thrived in periods of geographic dislocation. It describes the mixed methods approach selected for this investigation and the critical processes involved at the various stages.

3.0 A theoretical perspective

This research study explored the experiences of a group of young elite athletes in a period of geographical dislocation, using a mixed methods approach. It enabled the exploration of the transition experience to more accurately understand the characteristics and processes that facilitate thriving.

In this investigation, the researcher's philosophical perspective was that thriving was a subjective reality, best understood in terms of the individual's experience and that an appreciation of that experience informed an understanding. Nevertheless, the use of quantitative and qualitative processes to facilitate the inquiry was an integral part of the methodological design. This investigation drew on the philosophical ideas of pragmatism that challenged the idea that social science inquiry was only able to access the real world through scientific method (Murphy, 1990). Pragmatism sat between objectivism and relativism and was a natural and fluid pathway to search for practical outcomes, i.e. there may be a reality, but its nature and form is not known and the search is for more certainty, and therefore what you do frames the inquiry. In that regard, the rightness or wrongness of the experience was less important than the constructive insights into the experience (Crotty, 1998).

The concerns about compatibility of a mixed method design were assuaged by the pragmatic search for truth, rather than truth as an assumption (Howe, 1988). The pragmatic deconstruction of concepts such as truth invited a deeper search for the criteria that might support the claims, including accuracy, consistency and comprehensiveness. The 'blurring' of methodological lines is permitted when this approach is embraced. The link between pragmatism and this pluralist set of research tools was supported where the search for meaning was tested out in experience. There was a methodological freedom supported by an open philosophical position where inquiry took precedence over paradigms, and rather than take a difficult stance between purist positions, it was sensible to look for a workable solution that allowed for insights and a better understanding of a philosophical position. This approach rejected the incompatibility of approaches and advocated a pluralist position which was "... particularly useful where one needs to understand some special people, particular problem, or unique situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information" (Patton, 1990, p. 54). While a philosophical understanding that supported the inquiry process was important, taking a pragmatist position allowed a focus on the practical and conceptual in the context of the inquiry. This approach is described in brief in Table 3.1 below.

Characteristics	Pragmatism
Method	Quantitative and qualitative
Logic	Deductive and inductive
Epistemology	Both objective and subjective points of view
Ontology	Accepts an external reality, but chooses explanations that best reflect perceived outcomes
Causal linkages	There may be causal relationships, but they cannot be asserted

Table 3.1 The Pragmatist paradigm (adapted from Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998)

3.0.1 A search for meaning

The philosophical perspective that supported this mixed method approach, i.e. the epistemological and methodological pluralism, allowed for (a) the relativity of perceptions, (b) the multiplicity of explanations; (c) the belief networks that embed assumptions; (d) the obtaining of probabilistic evidence through induction; (e) the social nature of research and the values that are inherent in a research enterprise (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Phillips & Burbules, 2000).

In the context of this philosophical position, the aim of this research was to provide insights into the characteristics and processes of thriving in periods of geographical dislocation by observing the transition experience in a dislocating context. The research was designed to capture individual experiences and combine them in a mixed method approach, exploring themes, concepts and categories (Minichiello, Sullivan, Greenwood, & Axford, 1999). This integrative approach was designed to bring new insight into the understanding of geographically dislocating transitions and the associated characteristics and processes.

Tashakkori (2003) emphasised the importance of focussing attention on the research problem and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem. Both qualitative and quantitative researchers draw meaning from their data and develop arguments about what has occurred, however a mixed method approach was able to draw from the strengths of both paradigms where the researcher (a) described the data, (b) constructed explanations for the data, and (c) speculated about the outcomes (Sechrest & Sidani, 1995). In that sense this inquiry was an attempt to provide a warranted explanation for thriving in periods of geographical dislocation. To take a mixed method approach allowed the researcher to "...mix and match design components that offer the

best chance of answering their specific research questions" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 16).

3.1 The mixed method approach

Dzurec and Abraham (1993) point out "...that researchers can trust in the skill and knowledge of the philosophers who developed the assumptions of their paradigms" (p. 76). While quantitative research is characterised by the necessity to explain events, particularly in terms of cause and effect (Creswell, 2003), qualitative research is characterised by (a) an interpretivist philosophy in regard to how the social world is created and understood, (b) flexible data generation methods that are sensitive to the social context, and (c) uses analysis that involves understanding of the complexity and context (Mason, 2000). Qualitative research is concerned with the meaning attached to the subjective experience; it is "...a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). The mixed method approaches are "... products of the pragmatist paradigm and combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches within different phases of the research process" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 19)

3.1.1 The current investigation

The mixed method approach in this study combined both a qualitative and quantitative research approach. Combining both methodologies allowed a broader exploration of the experience of thriving and compensated for the inherent limitations of relying on one methodology (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). While quantitative research assumed that the reality being investigated was stable (Creswell, 2003), qualitative research allowed a more subjective investigation, where the participants' own frame of reference was a guide to understanding (Minichiello et al., 1999). Consistent

with mixed methods practice, this investigation was designed to place the "... inquiry decisions primarily in the nature of the phenomenon being investigated and the contexts in which the studies are conducted" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 107).

This partially mixed, sequential study design (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2006) provided the structure that addressed the research objectives, purpose and question. The use of the selected instruments provided the researcher with an accurate understanding of the nature of the participant group. This was an important base line to establish as the first step towards the development of an understanding of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation. The selected instruments provided a broad description of the cohort in terms of their general personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992); their psychological well-being (Ryff, 2003); their sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987); and the impact of geographic dislocation as the contextual challenge (using an instrument developed for this study).

The semi-structured interviews provided a method whereby the complex, underlying processes could be better understood. A logical model was constructed where the data were collected, coded, and thematic concepts identified. Further, these concepts were tested for clustering of evidence for the identification of imbedded categories (i.e. thriving, surviving and languishing).

Applying a model of transition (Nicholson, 1987) enabled the creation of a 'thriving transition cycle' where the concepts of thriving were ascribed to the stages of the transition, and the processes attributed to the categories could be analysed.

3.2 Procedures

3.2.1 Ethical considerations

The adherence to a code of conduct that guides research provides assurance that the rights, values and needs of participants are protected (Christians, 2000). The participant group in this study was a group of young men drafted to the Australian Football League (AFL) which required interstate relocation to take up their contracts. As an exploratory study, two clubs were selected in different States to provide a mix of environments; and fulfilling the requirement that participants were engaged with a club which was geographically dislocated from their home context. Permission (Ethics H007674) was granted by the University of Tasmania Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix B 'Ethics permission') to invite eligible participants, and to conduct the study. Participants were provided with an Information Sheet (see Appendix C) that explained the research and an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D) for signature.

3.2.1 Sampling

Key participants (N=24) were chosen by purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) through the auspice of the participating organisations as the third party recruiters. Inclusion was described by selection criteria, i.e. those recruited to the AFL club who were required to relocate, and as a consequence were geographically dislocated in the transition to take up their position.

Initial permission to conduct the study was obtained through an exchange of letters with the club administration. Liaison was established with each of the individual club 'player administration managers'; and letters of invitation were distributed to eligible participants. The response to the invitations was very positive with approximately 85% return (i.e. Club #1 12/15 of those invited agreed to participate; Club #2 12/14 of those invited agreed to participate). The

participants received an information sheet (see Appendix C) that explained the purposes of the investigation and an outline of the procedures and safeguards.

Arrangements were made to visit the club for phase one of the investigation (i.e. the administering of the selected instruments), and the first interview (i.e. individual appointment times were arranged).

The core group was supplemented by informants drawn from the coaching, recruiting and administrative staff, together with members of the clubs' family support groups. The participants were assured that this was an independent research study and that the data collected were only to be used for research purposes. In addition any report back to their respective clubs would be of an aggregate nature and that all information would be de-identified. They were encouraged to respond freely and were given opportunities to ask for clarifications in regard to the research purpose and direction. All indications were that the participants completed the instruments and offered their views in interview in a frank and open manner. A significant number of participants commented on the importance of the accuracy of the study, indicating their preparedness to be candid.

PART ONE

3.3 The nature of the participant group

3.3.1 Procedures

Following ethics approval, the participant groups were contacted by the third party agents and consent was obtained to participate in the study at mutually agreed times. The research was explained to the participant group, the conditions of consent were summarised and questions about the study were answered.

The investigation took place in two separate, but similar locations. This was comprised of dedicated rooms within the club administration building, separated from the normal operations area. These dedicated rooms were secure, private and quiet locations and provided an optimum environment for the study to be conducted. Initially the participants (i.e. n=24) attended as groups (i.e. n=12 at each location) and the participants were welcomed and reminded of the intentions of the study, privacy and confidentiality, and the ethical considerations.

The selected instruments were distributed in a dedicated sequence and these were completed in approximately 45 minutes. The data collection instruments were used as the first stage of the investigation to establish the nature of the participant group. The researcher used self-report instruments to collect data on general personality, psychological well-being, and personal orientation (sense of coherence); together with simple demographic data. The instruments were comprised of: Personality profile (NEO-FFI, see outline in Appendix E), Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB, see outline in Appendix F), and Orientation to Life Questionnaire (or Sense of Coherence [SOC], see outline in Appendix G).

The same participants agreed to the second part of the study with regard to the semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted in the same

locations, but on an individual basis by appointment. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and took approximately one hour to complete. The interviews were subsequently transcribed and stored, using NVivo 7 software, on a secure computer within the university framework.

At the conclusion of the interviews the individual participants completed two brief instruments, designed by the researcher, to gather data on the impact of their geographic dislocation through the Geographic Dislocation Scale (GDS, see Appendix H) and the time spent in the transition, through the Transition Time Scale (TTS, see Appendix I). These were designed to assess the contextual and temporal considerations of the challenging circumstances of the transition.

3.3.2 General personality

The NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992) provided a robust measure of normal adult personality and provided insight in regard to emotional, interpersonal, experiential and motivational styles. McCrae and Costa (1986) suggested that there are "...associations between personality traits, effective coping mechanisms and positive outcomes [and] ... the complexity of assessing the contribution of coping efforts to well-being" (p. 399). The 60-item scale was administered using a 5 point Likert scale, and for the purposes of this study, the NEO-FFI provided an insight into the homogeneity and stability of the cohort as they faced the geographically dislocating challenge. The individuals could be identified across the five domains and plotted for comparison and comment.

3.3.3 Psychological Well-Being

Ryff (1989, 1995) argued that little attention had been given to causes and consequences of positive functioning, or the defining features of well-being. Ryff's concept of psychological well-being reflected a broad concept that "... focuses on the path to fulfilment of one's potential through the pursuit of

important long term goals rather than shorter term feelings of enjoyment in the present" (Grossbaum & Bates, 2002, p. 121).

The Scales of Psychological Well Being (SPWB) is an acknowledged measure of psychological well-being (Keyes & Magyar-Moe, 2003; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2006). This multidimensional model provided a measure of subjective psychological well-being that contains both a cognitive and affective component (Diener et al., 1997; Ryff, 1989). The SPWB is an 84-item scale, constructed to measure six dimensions of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

For the purposes of this study, the SPWB was administered to provide further insight into the homogeneity and stability of the cohort as they faced the geographically dislocating challenge. The individuals are identified across the six domains and plotted for comparison and comment. The instrument provided a broad indication of positive functioning and insight into the concept of psychological well-being.

3.3.4 Personal orientation - Sense of Coherence

Antonovsky (1979, 1987, 1993, 1998) described the 'sense of coherence' (SOC) as "...a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable, and explicable; (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement" (Antonovsky 1987, p.19).

The SOC was measured using the full 29 item version of the SOC (or Orientation to Life Questionnaire)(Antonovsky, 1987). The questionnaire comprises 11 items

measuring comprehensibility, 10 measuring manageability, and 8 measuring meaningfulness on a 7-point Likert scale.

For the purposes of this study, the SOC provided further insights into the homogeneity and stability of the cohort as they faced the geographically dislocating challenge. The individuals could be identified across the three domains and for their overall sense of coherence and plotted for comparison and comment.

3.3.5 Geographic dislocation

A measure of dislocation stress was developed by the researcher. The Geographic Dislocation Scale (GDS) was designed to capture the challenge of the experience of the transition and was described in eight polarised dimensions: (1) in control vs. lacking control, (2) apprehensive vs. keen, (3) excited vs. unexcited, (4) secure vs. insecure, (5) lonely vs. engaged, (6) optimistic vs. pessimistic (7) fearful vs. unafraid, and (8) ready vs. unprepared.

The prompt: "Moving is an experience that can involve many different kinds of feelings. When you think about your move to the club, especially the changes and transitions involved, did you feel...?" was used to garner responses from participants. The researcher asked the question for each of the eight adjectival alternatives and scored the response on a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from: 1 (not at all) to 4 (extremely). A score for 'geographic dislocation challenge' was created by tallying the responses (alternates by reverse scoring and summing the scores) for an overall level of challenge during the transition. These data gave further insights into the individual experience of geographic dislocation and to provide background information for the deeper, qualitative exploration of the experience.

The GDS validity and reliability was examined through a number of processes. Face validity was examined by distribution to colleagues and to club administrators. Although subjectivity is inevitable in assessment of face validity, the instrument was reckoned to be persuasive and seeming right to the reader (Lacity & Jansen, 1994). Content validity was inferred from expertise in the literature (e.g. Kwan et al. 2001; Fisher & Cooper 1990; Selye 1956, 1991) and from content experts in the field. Construct validity was more challenging, but the construct of geographic dislocation challenge was explored through the eclectic literature that enabled a precise definition of the construct. This literature included the stresses associated with relocation in the military (Cleverley 2001), homesickness (Fisher, 1989, 1990b), work role transitions (Nicholson 1990; Lee 1990), thriving (O'Leary, 1998; Spreitzer et al., 2005) and job relocation (for reviews of this literature, see Brett et al., 1992; Luo & Cooper, 1990; Munton et al., 1993). The score created by adding the 8 scores yielded good reliability (albeit with a small cohort n=24) with an alpha coefficient of .755; suggesting an acceptable indication of dislocation. (See Appendix J, 'GDS reliability matrix data'.)

3.3.6 Transition time

The temporal aspects of this transition were examined using the Transition Time Scale (TTS) (see Appendix I "The Transition Time Scale'). This scale examines the transition experience in three parts, reflecting the stages of transition described by Nicholson (1987).

(a) From preparation to encounter;

(b) From encounter to adjustment; and

(c) From adjustment to stability.

The participants were shown the scale with markers at three points of the scale being:

(a) "I am exploring what is involved in the transition."

(b) "I am adjusting to the changes and learning what is required."

(c) "I understand what is required and I am actively engaged."

The participants were asked to reflect on their transitional journey and to identify their current position on a scale; and then the time involved in reaching that point. The participants had no difficulty in identifying their position and the timeframe involved. This information was then processed as data for each of the stages independently.

Face validity for the TTS was examined by distribution to colleagues and to club administrators, and the instrument was reckoned to be a fair description of the stages (Lacity & Jansen, 1994). Content and construct validity was inferred from the expert literature, with particular reference to Nicholson (1984; 1987; 1990; Nicholson & West, 1988).

3.3.7 Summary

A summary of the instruments use to establish the nature of the participant group is described in Table 3.2 below.

Instrument	Description	Value	Comment
Psychological Well-Being (PWB) (Ryff, 1995)	Six dimensions of Well-Being • Self acceptance; • Personal growth; • Purpose in life; • Positive relationships with others; • Environmental mastery; • Autonomy.	Positive attributes rather than pathology. Validated and reliable. Derived from the literature on lifespan development, mental health and personal growth leading to positive functioning. Provides an indication of the relative homogeneity of the cohort in regard to this domain.	• Widely accepted in a range of studies. Series of statements with Likert scale response. • Literature suggests that characteristics of PWB buffer against mental ill-health. • A sense of control (Fisher et al 1989, 1990) mediates against the effects of the transition. • Personal meanings are important determinants of the impact of change. • Preparation through health and well-being buffers against the stress of relocation. (Nicholson 1990, Lee 1990).
Orientation to life through the short version Sense of Coherence (SOC) (Antonovsky, 1987)	Dispositional orientation to the world in three dimensions: • Comprehensibility; • Manageability; & • Meaningfulness.	Antonovsky suggests that stress should be comprehended and managed and that stressful occasions are worthy of engagement. Sheds light on the underpinning characteristics of coping. Provides an indication of the relative homogeneity of the cohort in regard to this domain.	• Respected instrument with a positive perspective. • Literature suggests that those with a high Sense of Coherence can cope better with stress. (Antonovsky 1979, 1987)) • A sense of control mediates against the negative effects of transition. (Fisher et al. 1990) • A better understanding of the adaptive tasks needed to be completed for a successful transition. • Internal locus of control is important to buffer against the stress of transition.
NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) (Costa & McCrae 1985)	Measures five broad domains of personality: • Neuroticism (N) • Extraversion (E) • Openness (O) • Agreeableness (A) • Conscientiousness (C)	The interaction between personality, social environment and life experience can be explored more thoroughly with an understanding of the personality traits that individuals bring to the transition moment. Provides an indication of the relative homogeneity of the cohort in regard to this domain.	• Literature suggests that optimism may affect trajectory of recovery. • May shed light on the "cause" or "consequence" of transition as a stressor. • The impact of transition may affect the trajectory of personality development.
Geographic Dislocation Scale (GDS)	A short scale designed to measure the stress impact of a geographically dislocating transition.	Captures the levels of stress of the particular moment and by inference, the level of need for the resources to best cope with the geographic dislocation. Provides an indication of the relative homogeneity of the cohort in regard to this domain.	Assists the understanding of the geographic dislocation as a challenge, and provides a point of reference for accessing and applying resources to meet the demands of the experience.
Transition Time Scale (TTS)	A short scale designed to measure the time taken to reach the stages of the transition.	Captures aspects of the dimensions of the transition.	Informs an understanding of the dimensions of the transition

Table 3.2 Instrument review

PART TWO

3.4 Semi-structured interviews

The interview is a common method of collecting data, and the style of interview ranges on the continuum from non-directive through to closed and structured (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990; Yin, 1994). The semi-structured interview contributed to the mixed method approach, where the interview remained open-ended but drew from a "...set of questions derived from the case study protocol" (Yin, 1994, p. 85). In this study, the semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to explore the experience of the geographic dislocation and the process of thriving. It allowed for corroboration, probing and expansion beyond the text of the question (Yin, 1994), and acknowledged and protected against interviewer bias (Bryman, 1992). The author was the sole interviewer in this research and the interview environment was consistent across all participants.

3.4.1 The interview structure

The interview structure was devised by reference to the literature (this is summarised in the Interview Framework in Table 3.3 below). This framework provided the scaffolding to design the semi-structured interviews and allowed a reference point to the research literature for each of the lines of inquiry. It also provided the reference point for the researcher to question the purpose of the inquiry and to rationalise the form, order and reasons for the questions. This provided a check and balance process for the semi-structured interview schedule that resulted (see Appendix K).

Questions	Examples of linking literature	Why
A1 Tell me your story. A2 How did you get here?	All material	A starting point for the investigation
B1 What did you know about what you would experience after the draft? B2 What did you expect about what you would experience after the draft? B3 What do you know about yourself that allows you to thrive?	(Chick & Meleis, 1986): suggest "awareness" of the experience of transition is important to its success. (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993) describe the absence of pathology in adverse circumstances that leads to resilience (Ryff, 1989) describes *purpose in life* as an important ingredient in psychological wellbeing (O'Leary, 1998) explores the process of thriving in the face of adversity	Awareness is the congruence between what was *known* and what was *expected* Awareness Internal self-knowledge Confidence (protective factors)
C1 How did you find out what was required of you? C2 Who has helped you in your journey? C3 Who was the most important person (why)? C4 Who did you turn to for advice? C5 In what ways did you prepare for the move?	(Nicholson, 1990) describes the transition cycle and the meanings attached etc. (Ryff, 1989) suggests *positive relations with others* and *autonomy* as key to psychological wellbeing. (Masten et al., 2004) describes resilience in the transition to adulthood (Rutter, 1989) suggests that reasoned responses, planning and good self-esteem provide the necessary frame of reference for moderating variables in a stress-health continuum. (Werner & Smith, 1988) describe the importance of 'role models' as a reference for success (Spreitzer et al., 2005) describe the processes of thriving in a work setting. (Porath & Bateman, 2006) describe the impact of goal orientation to strategies of adjustment	The degree to which someone demonstrates involvement (seeking info, using role models, actively preparing, and proactively modifying activities) indicates their levels of engagement. Degrees of independence & autonomy. Who/what do they need? Those that need external support will miss it if absent.

Table 3.3 Interview Framework

Questions	Examples of linking literature	Why
D1 Have you maintained contact with family and friends? D2 How have you done that? D3 Have you had to make changes in your old routines? D4 What sort of changes have you made?	(Meleis et al., 2000) suggest change involves effects and meanings in the transition. (Ryff, 1989) suggests *mastery of the environment* as a key to psychological wellbeing (Werner & Smith, 1988) suggest a range of positive family factors that assist successful adaptation.	Change and difference (new roles and therefore new effects and meanings) their nature, temporality, perceived importance, "fit" with expectations. Degree and quality of change (scale?)
E1 Tell me about when you first began to anticipate being drafted. E2 Reflecting on the experience so far, when was it most confusing? E3 When was the experience most clear and working well?	(Bridges, 1995) describes the flow of movement through time. (Nicholson, 1990) describes this linear process as a cycle. (Antonovsky, 1998) describes being able to access the resources in a timely way to enable resilient behaviour. (Schlossberg, 1989) describes a model of describing adaptation to transition (Selder, 1989) explores transition as the resolution of uncertainty.	Captures the transition experience from the first signs of anticipation through to the various stages of stability.
F1 "Some people who go through this process find themselves going through a range of experiences" ...how do you think you're going at the moment? (life, adjustment, routines, in yourself) F2 "On this scale, where would you put yourself?"	Bridges (1995) describes the potential for engagement through awareness. Nicholson (1990) suggests stabilisation as the last stage of the transition cycle. Luthar & Zigler (1991) describe resilience in terms of functional or dysfunctional coping (Ickovics & Park, 1998) explore thriving as a salutogenic focus	Captures the markers for change that suggest the transition from instability to stability. This suggests increased awareness of change = more active engagement in the transition

Table 3.3 Interview Framework (cont.)

Questions	Examples of linking literature	Why
G1 Has your life changed after being drafted? G2 What has been different? (timeframe also, in the beginning, now) G3 What has been the same? (timeframe also, in the beginning, now) G4 Is the culture at the club different from your own beliefs and attitudes? G5 Similarities / differences?	(Nicholson, 1990) describes 'significance' as a key taxonomy for understanding outcomes for personal change and role development. (Waters & Sroufe, 1983) describe social competence as protective. (Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001) describe thriving as a useful perspective for understanding well-being. (Carver, 1998) explains the linkages between resilience and thriving, and the underlying processes.	Positive outcomes rely on the characteristics of the mover: ▪ Career stage; ▪ Personality variables; ▪ Management of the transition; ▪ The "fit" between old and new; ▪ Contextual factors (i.e. club, home, etc.) ▪ Social "fit"
H1 How confident were you about your ability to make the transition? H2 What did you find difficult in the transition? H3 What was easy for you?	(Antonovsky, 1987) describes the 'dynamic feeling of confidence' that is the *sense of coherence*. (Ryff, 1989) describes *self acceptance* as important to psychological wellbeing. (Nicholson, 1987) describes the transition cycle. (Fisher, 1997) describes the impact of geographic dislocation	The idea of positive self concepts and self confidence contribute to an ability to thrive and draw meaning from experiences.
I1 What helped you with the new pressures and expectations? (what worked for you?) I2 How has that changed over time? (when did it happen) I3 How did you contribute to those adjustments?	(Frydenberg, 2004) describes coping as the efforts to deal with the stressors in a particular environment and the range of personal characteristics brought to bear. (Selye, 1991) describes *eustress* as the arousal that allows the individual to mobilise the resources to cope functionally. (Keyes, 2002) explores the mental health continuum from thriving to languishing	Adds weight to the idea of thriving as a process rather than a trait Important to explore the timeframe and variability, especially as a **process** rather than a product. Identification of some real events that might have helped. (e.g. social, practical)

Table 3.3 Interview Framework (cont.)

The areas for inclusion in the semi-structured interviews were designed to capture the characteristics and processes of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation, i.e.

- The pre-transition experience;
- The congruence between the known and the expected;
- Awareness and confidence about the transition;
- Demonstrated engagement and involvement;
- Degrees of independence and autonomy;
- Levels of perceived support;
- Meaning attached to change;
- Markers for stability;
- Awareness and confidence during the transition;
- Management strategies for transition;
- Self-concepts and sense-making;
- Timeframes and milestones

Similarly the administrative staff at the clubs provided a series of interviews guided by a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix L 'Staff Interview Schedule') where particular themes emerged in regard to the recruitment and success of players.

3.4.2 The interview

The interviews for this study were conducted in accordance with standard guidelines (e.g. Creswell, 2003; Minichiello et al., 1999). The environment for the interview was consistent and comprised of a quiet, dedicated room within the club environs, but removed from the general business area. The participants attended by appointment (approximately 3 per day) and the interviews were between 60–75 minutes' duration each. The participants were welcomed and reminded of the intentions of the study, issues of privacy and confidentiality, the

ethical considerations, and the permissions required for a taped recording for subsequent transcription. The investigation's semi-structured interviews were conducted in two parts (T1 and T2), and recorded for transcription and analysis using NVivo 7. The first interview with participants (T1) was an introduction to the research study, consisting of Information Sheets describing the study aims and objectives, and Consent Forms indicating the participants' preparedness to be involved in the research study. T1 included the collection of demographic data and the negotiation of a timetable for a follow-up semi-structured interview to explore the research question in more detail. T1 was also the time at which the four self-report measures of personal characteristics were collected (two measures of well-being, one of personality, and the dislocation scale). Also at T1 additional information was obtained through semi-structured interviews with ancillary staff, coaching staff, administrative staff, and volunteer host families who provide room and board for some players ("home" parents).

The semi-structured interviews (T2) were conducted in a 10-day period with each of the participant groups, and followed the interview schedule designed to collect the individual and collective characteristics of the transition process. While the instruments and demographic data provided insight into the character of the cohort, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to explore the experience in more detail.

3.4.3 The interview data analysis

The interview data analysis process was assisted by NVivo (NVivo 7) software. This enabled the initial capture of the interview data as verbatim transcripts and the subsequent coding into themes, concepts and categories (Minichiello et al., 1999). This thematic analysis also allowed for the clustering of data, enabling a more complete understanding of the processes in action during the stages of geographic dislocation.

The interview data analysis was divided into four stages and different analysis processes applied to each stage. Stage One involved the descriptive analysis of the cohort obtained through the quantitative instruments. Stage Two involved a thematic analysis of the narrative data obtained through the semi-structured interviews. Stage Three involved descriptive on-coding analysis of the concurrent themes and the creation of concepts. Stage Four involved categorisation within the concepts to more fully understand the processes involved in thriving in periods of geographic dislocation (this process is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below).

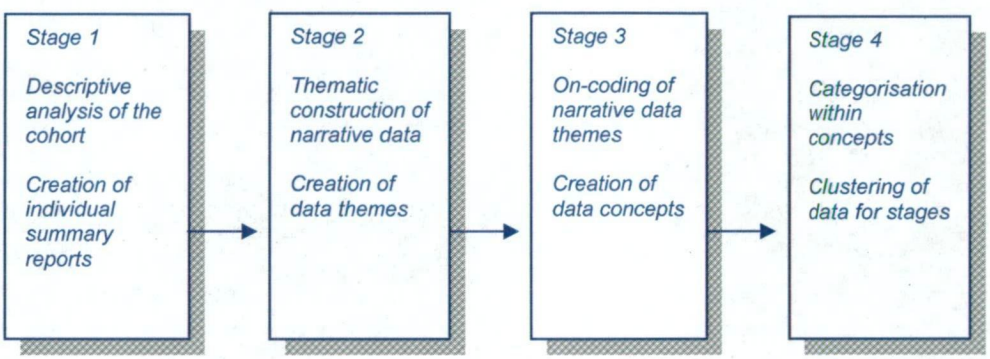

Figure 3.1 **Stages of analysis**

3.4.4 Stage One: Descriptive analysis of the cohort

This stage involved the scoring and initial recording of the information drawn from the quantitative instruments. This information was not gathered with a view to generalise from the data, but rather to provide a comprehensive understanding of the character of the cohort; and to enrich the understandings of the semi-structured interviews by providing a background to the participants.

The quantitative instruments provided a rich set of data which allowed the accurate description of the cohort across a number of domains:

- Extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness and conscientiousness (NEO-FFI) (Costa & McCrae, 1992).
- Autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (SPWB) (Ryff, 2003).
- Comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness (SOC) (Antonovsky, 1987)

Further information was collated in regard to the experience of the challenge of geographic dislocation (GDS) and the timeframes to stages of adaptation (TTS).

The information collected and transcribed in Stage One was used to create a summary page (see exemplars in Appendices M (i), M (ii) and M (iii), 'Summary Sheets') for each participant. This assisted the identification of emerging concepts and the identification of potential clustering of participants for further analysis (Minichiello et al., 1999). The summary page consisted of:

- Results from the suite of instruments;
- Summaries of interpretive findings from the suite of instruments;
- Comments and potential coding themes;
- Explanatory notes.

The summary page foundation for the inclusion of information in Stage Two and the preliminary structure for on-coding using the concepts that emerged from that process. The quantitative data enabled the nature of the participant group to be accurately described; and provided a number of concurrent themes for exploration within the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews. The summary pages provided two pathways for analysis:

(a) As a summary sheet for each participant; and

(b) As domain description that describes the relative homogeneity of the group as the participant group.

3.4.3 Stage Two: Transcription and concept construction of narrative data

This stage involved the transcription of interview data collected from each participant and the creation of NVivo files to enable the analysis process. The tapes were transcribed by the researcher and the de-identified transcripts checked for accuracy by an independent, university researcher. The transcription became the first step in the analysis process and the process enabled initial coding for emphasis, sentiment and deliberation.

The data from the taped transcripts provided the next component of what would be a comprehensive report on each participant, and the participants' reference in the emerging themes and concepts (see Appendices N (i) and N (ii), 'NVivo Coding'). The data were stored as a case node for each participant within NVivo and included the demographic collected at T1.

The data for each participant were then coded using the emergent themes. These coding nodes allowed the data to be examined in an orderly and constructive manner, e.g. reflections by a participant on an earlier piece of information could be coded accurately for the theme or concept. The complete set of interview data were coded in this manner and a range of concept nodes became apparent. The coded text was explored for their best fit or their exception to these concepts, giving rise to the consideration of further concepts being developed. This process of application, exception and creation accounted for all of the interview data and confidence that any final set of concepts would be reflective of the data sets (Minichiello et al., 1999).

The consequence was an elegant twofold compilation of data:

1. The concept containing the participant data (viewed from the theme's perspective and providing the pathways for concept attribution to transition stages); and
2. The participants coded to the concepts (viewed from the individual perspective and providing the pathways for categorisation).

3.4.4 Stage Three: On-coding of narrative data into themes/concepts

This stage involved the on-coding of the participant data gathered through the semi-structured interviews with regard to the concurrent themes and concepts across all sources of data collection. This process also provided the foundation for a qualitative analysis of the processes involved in geographically dislocating transitions.

The coding themes accounted for the first wave interrogation of the interview data and provided a broad capture of the emerging concepts. The 'theme to concept' process involved the collapse of the themed areas where duplication was apparent, and the merging of theme nodes when definitions were inclusive. This iterative process of comparison was re-examined in the context of the coding themes from which they were drawn. The coding process was cross-referenced to provide auditable links from the coding themes to the overarching coding concepts. The coding themes that were developed provided a spreadsheet of information that allowed the development of the concepts through an iterative process.

Similarly, the final 16 concepts were cross-referenced with those themes that had been identified in the literature as contributing to thriving and the challenge of dislocating transitions. The matrix for this process appears below in Table 3.4.

Underlying themes	Coding argument	Explained as	Examples of linking literature	Concept
• Learning lessons • Long term plans • Unfolding dreams • Whatever it takes	• Positive self concepts • Capacity for recovery	The importance of positive self-concepts to negotiate transitions, and developing the understanding of what is required and how to get there	(Hobfoll, 1998; Nicholson, 1987; Oyen, 1998; Spreitzer et al., 2005; Van Breda, 1999)	Gaining confidence
• The right message • New independence • The initial shock • Getting the hang of it all • Working through problems	• Life events • Purposeful • Readiness • Uncertainty	The links between life events and disorder, and awareness of the experience of transition is important to its success, and therefore the readiness for the challenge.	(Baldridge et al., 2006; Carter, 1999b; Chick & Meleis, 1986; Elder jnr, King, & Conger, 1996; Fisher & Hood, 1988; Ryff & Singer, 2003; Vernberg, Greenhoot, & Biggs, 2006)	2. Readiness for the challenge
• Competence • Seizing opportunities • Resignation • Luck • Blind obedience • Mimicking	• Positive outcomes • Having or lacking insight. • Learning from the experience.	Productive outcomes in the face of a challenge. Wrestling with the demands of mastering the new environment.	(Anshel, Williams, & Williams, 2000; Antonovsky, 1987; Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001; Bridges, 2004; Carver, 1998; Hobfoll, Schroder, Wells, & Malek, 2002; Ickovics & Park, 1998; Nicholson, 1987; Nortier, 1995; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2003; Taylor, 1989; Valentiner, Holahan, & Moos, 1994)	3. Environmental mastery
• A slave to the system • Listen and learn • Seeing the big picture • What works for me • Developing confidence • bewilderment	• Engagement • Commitment • New directions • Leaving the old and embracing the new	Making sense of the transitions and associated challenges Pre-occupation with characteristics of new environment and loss of old, and learning from observation and making positive changes given the clarity of purpose and direction.	(Anshel & Wells, 2000; Baldridge et al., 2006; Brett & Reilly, 1988; Brett et al., 1993; Burke, 1988; Fisher, 1990d; Hobfoll, 1998; Ickovics & Park, 1998; Moos & Schaefer, 1986; Moyle & Parkes, 1999; Munton et al., 1993; Noblet & Gifford, 2002; Ryff & Singer, 2000; Stahl & Caliguri, 2005)	4. Sense-making
• Mentors • Friends • Family backup	• Support systems • What is going on? • Stability • Meaning to things • Sense of direction	The range of support systems available and accessible to promote well-being.	(Dunkel-Schetter, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1987; Eckenrode, 1992; Hobfoll, 1998; Ickovics & Park, 1998; Kobasa & Puccetti, 1983; Lee, 1990; Luo & Cooper, 1990; Rodgers & Rodgers, 2000; Stroebe, van Vliet, Hewstone, & Willis, 2002; Valentiner et al., 1994)	5. Support systems

Table 3.4 **Matrix for coding links to literature**

• Altruistic • Keen to please • Calculating • Competitive • Organised /confused • Resourceful / less exacting	• Agreeableness or • Confident awareness • Clear thinking, or • Muddied thinking	Inward strategies to develop autonomy in the new environment. Outward strategies to develop autonomy in the new environment and an understanding of the role-fit relationship	(Allen & Van de Vliert, 1984; Costa & McCrae, 1998; Nicholson, 1984, 1987; Oatley, 1990; Ryff & Singer, 2003)	6. Role development
• Energetic • Enthusiastic • Optimistic • Measured • Withdrawn	• Confident or • Tentative. • Clarity of purpose or • Uncertainty	Being clear about what to do in the face of the challenge. Being unsure about what to do in the face of the challenge.	(Abbot-Chapman, Hughes, & Wyld, 1992; Anshel, Jamieson, & Raviv, 2001; Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Ballantyne, 2000; Carver & Scheier, 1999; Evans, 2000; Scheier & Carver, 1985; Schwarzer & Knoll, 2003)	7. Motivation
• Hanging on to concerns • Able to let go • Impulsive • Considered • Loss of person • Loss of place	• Defensive strategies or • Positive strategies • Control or • Uncertainty	Finding difficulty in personal planning or able to negotiate and plan personal pathways. Relocation stress reduced through reducing uncertainty	(Brett et al., 1992; Brett et al., 1993; Elder jnr et al., 1996; Fisher, 1990b, 1997; Fisher & Hood, 1988; Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Noblet & Gifford, 2002; Rosenbaum, 1988; Stroebe et al., 2002; Thurber, 1999; Thurber & Weisz, 1997)	8. Positive planning
• What do I do? • I know what to do • What is going on? • I know what is going on	• Comprehensible • Understandable	Clear, ordered and structured. The ability to identify the challenge and its component parts. The ability to identify resources that are linked to the challenging circumstances	(Aldwin, 1994; Antonovsky, 1987; Bridges, 2004; Carver, 1998; Chick & Meleis, 1986; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1994; Meleis et al., 2000; Moyle & Parkes, 1999; Porath & Bateman, 2006; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2000; VandeWalle et al., 2001; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997)	9. Comprehensibility
• How does this work? • I know how this works • I can do this. • I can't do this	• Manageable	The extent that available resources are adequate to meet demands	(Antonovsky, 1987; Hobfoll, 1998; Moos & Holahan, 2003; Sargent & Schlossberg, 1988; Smider et al., 1996)	10. Manageability

Table 3.4 **Matrix for coding links to literature (cont.)**

• I don't know why I do this • I know why I do this	• Meaningful	Worthy of engagement	(Antonovsky, 1987; Martocchio, 1994; Meleis et al., 2000; Nicholson, 1987; Porath & Bateman, 2006; Snyder, 1999a)	11. Meaningfulness
• Independent • Self determined	• Autonomous activity	Developing the individual skills and learning what is required in the new environment	(Black & Ashford, 1995; Nicholson, 1987; Noblet & Gifford, 2002; Porath & Bateman, 2006; VandeWalle et al., 2001; West et al., 1987)	12. Discretion
• Positive acceptance of change • Open to new experiences • Draw meaning from experience • Order from chaos	• Personal growth • Thriving through learning	Learning from the experience of the challenge	(Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001; Meleis et al., 2000; Nicholson, 1990; O'Leary, 1998; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995; Park, 1998; Porath & Bateman, 2006; Ryff & Singer, 2003; Schaefer & Moos, 1992; Spreitzer et al., 2005; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995)	13. Personal development
• Trusting • Understanding	• Positive relationship building	The impact of relationships with staff and colleagues	(Bowlby, 1980; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Fisher, 1997; Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996; Messner, 1992; Noblet & Gifford, 2002; Porath & Bateman, 2006; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2000; Stevenson, Finch, Hamer, & Elliott, 2003)	14. Relationship building
• Loneliness • Camaraderie • Family backup • Isolation	• Seclusion • Involvement	Finding it difficult to relate to others Giving meaning to the connections	(Antonovsky, 1987; Bowlby, 1980; Bridges, 1995; Carver & Scheier, 1999; Fisher, 1997; Keyes & Magyar-Moe, 2003; Oatley, 1990; Oatley & Bolton, 1985; Peel, 2000; Ryff & Singer, 2003; Shaffer et al., 2006; Snyder, 1999a)	15. Engagement
• Visualised pathways • Making sense of it all • Life on hold • Measured progress	• Trust and commitment • Hesitation	Strength in the face of adversity. Lack of strength in the face of adversity	(Clark & Payne, 1997; Connell, Ferres, & Travaglione, 2003; Mayer et al., 1995; Nicholson, 1987; O'Leary, 1998)	16. Trust and commitment

Table 3.4 **Matrix for coding links to literature (cont.)**

These links to the literature provided a guide for relevance and accuracy as the material was organised for discussion, and included the preparation of 'concept summaries' (see Appendices O (i), O (ii), O (iii) and O (iv) 'Concept Summary' exemplars). The coded concepts were subsequently examined to determine the strength of response, e.g. Gaining confidence was defined as 'developing the understanding of what is required and how to get there' and a coding guide provided examples of the coded comments from participants as being weak (not confident about the next step and a lack of real clarity about direction), moderate (emerging confidence and a general idea of direction), or strong (being confident about what is required and a real sense of direction). This was supplemented by examples that qualified the strength of response.

The emerging concepts were explored through the individual participants and through the clusters of participants and this informed the categorisation of concepts in Stage Four.

3.4.5 Stage Four: Categorisation of concepts and clustering

This stage involved the analysis of the data in regard to the categorisation of participants within the identified concepts. The 16 concept coding graphs provided the guide for the calculation of coding strength for each of the participants to facilitate the categorisation process. The individual participants on each of the 16 concepts were measured for their coding strength. Initially a 'tally-sheet' provided the density and direction of the coding to provide the discriminating information. This established the interim categories of *strong, moderate* or *weak* responses within the concepts. The application of the calibrated scale allowed for the conversion of coding strengths to a numerical representation (in 0.25 increments) that permitted the categorisation of participants in regard to each of the 16 concepts. This process was informed by

the clustering of participants at points within the concepts and who, for that concept, might be described as:

(a) Thriving: with scores that indicated a strong response to the concept descriptors;

(b) Surviving: with scores that indicated a moderate response to the concept descriptors; and

(c) Languishing: with scores that indicated a weak response to the concept descriptors.

The subsequent ascribing of concepts to the stages of the transition cycle was then possible (Nicholson, 1987), (see Appendices P (i), P (ii), P (iii) and P (iv) 'Concepts and Expanded Themes').

The clustering of participants at the stages of the transition cycle allowed a more focussed view of (a) the consistency of the participant clusters at each of the stages, (b) the trajectory of those thriving, surviving or languishing through the stages of the transition, and (c) the internal dimensions of the transition in regard to the categories, i.e. the characteristics associated with the nine dimensions (speed, amplitude, symmetry, continuity, discretion, complexity, propulsion, facilitation and significance) of the transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987), in regard to the three categories of this particular transition (thriving, surviving and languishing).

3.5 Validity and reliability of the data

The issues of validity and reliability in this study referred to the rigor of the research and that the reasoning was reasonable and well founded. The transparency of that process was a key consideration.

3.5.1 Methodological reliability

Reliability in this qualitative component of the study required careful, honest and accurate collection of data (Mason, 2000). Evidence of trustworthiness, dependability, and authenticity were addressed throughout the study, and the stages of the research carefully recorded. Methodologically, these strategies included careful sampling, contextualisation, and the presentation of evidence in the form of quotations to support conclusions (Minichiello et al., 1999). The strategies also included:

(a) The careful design of the semi-structured interviews, with regular reference to the supporting literature (see Table 3.4, pp. 66-68);

(b) The verbatim transcription of the interview transcripts to provide a consistent set of data for thematic coding;

(c) A coding framework drawn from the literature, together with examples from the data set.

The precision of the preparation for the data collection, the data collection process and the subsequent analysis were testament to the attention given to issues of methodological reliability.

3.5.2 Coder reliability

In a content analysis framework, coding by a single coder required testing for the stability of the coding. Initially, coder reliability was achieved through adherence to the content analysis protocol, i.e.:

(a) There was documentation of the research processes and definitional interpretations;

(b) The coding environment was consistent over the time of the coding;

(c) The preparation for the coding process ensured the consistency of approach (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998).

When multiple coders are used there are mathematical tests of coder reliability to take into account the complexity of the coding, chance agreement and probability (Riffe et al., 1998). When, as in this study, a single coder was used, it was imperative to demonstrate that the coding proceeded in a rigorous, objective manner and that there were reasonable and well-founded assumptions. In that regard a second coder was used to check reliability, using a random sample (approximately 15%) of the transcript material. The second coder was provided with the de-identified transcript material and the thematic definitional frameworks. The four variables used in the coding for themes (strong association, moderate association, weak association, no association) were tested accordingly. The blind coding was tested for coder reliability using Scott's Pi (Neuendorf, 2002), and a strong coder reliability score of 0.88 was returned.

3.5.3 Validity of analysis

The validity of the data was demonstrated through conceptual and ontological clarity, where meaningful epistemology was supported in the mixed method approach, i.e. the epistemological and methodological pluralism (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Phillips & Burbules, 2000). The mixed method approach allowed for an examination of the research question through a sequential inquiry that identified the nature of the participant group, and recorded their perceptions of the dislocating experience. The data generation methods were chosen to meet the needs of the inquiry and to control for confounding extraneous issues (Mason, 2000). The strategy and particular methods chosen to generate data

were selected to (a) identify the particular characteristics of the participant group, (b) identify the challenging circumstances involved in the dislocating transition, (c) determine the timeframes in which this occurred, (d) explore the experiences of the individuals within the participant group, (e) more accurately describe the processes and characteristics of thriving in periods of geographically dislocating transitions. The semi-structured interviews contributed to the validity of the research through the enhanced sensitivity and flexibility of the inquiry to explore aspects of interest in more depth (Creswell, 2003).

The validity of the interpretation of the data was supported by the cross-coding reliability process described above (Neuendorf, 2002). It was also an 'auditable trail' of inquiry that documented each phase of collection, each iteration of analysis, and each pathway to interpretation. It involved "...charting and justifying the steps through which [the] interpretations were made" (Mason, 2000, p. 150)

3.6 The Transition Perspective

The narrative data had been coded for concepts (i.e. the underlying themes as concept statements); and as categories (i.e. the clustering of participants as thriving, surviving or languishing). It was also constructive to account for the clustering of concepts in transition stages (Nicholson, 1987). While the broad challenges of the transition stages had been explored in the literature (e.g. Nicholson, 1984, 1987, 1990; Nicholson & West, 1988), the particular stage characteristics of geographic dislocation and more particularly, of thriving in those circumstances was not known.

The transition cycle (see Figure 3.2 below) provided the scaffolding for the attribution of concepts to the four stages and for the discussion of those processes.

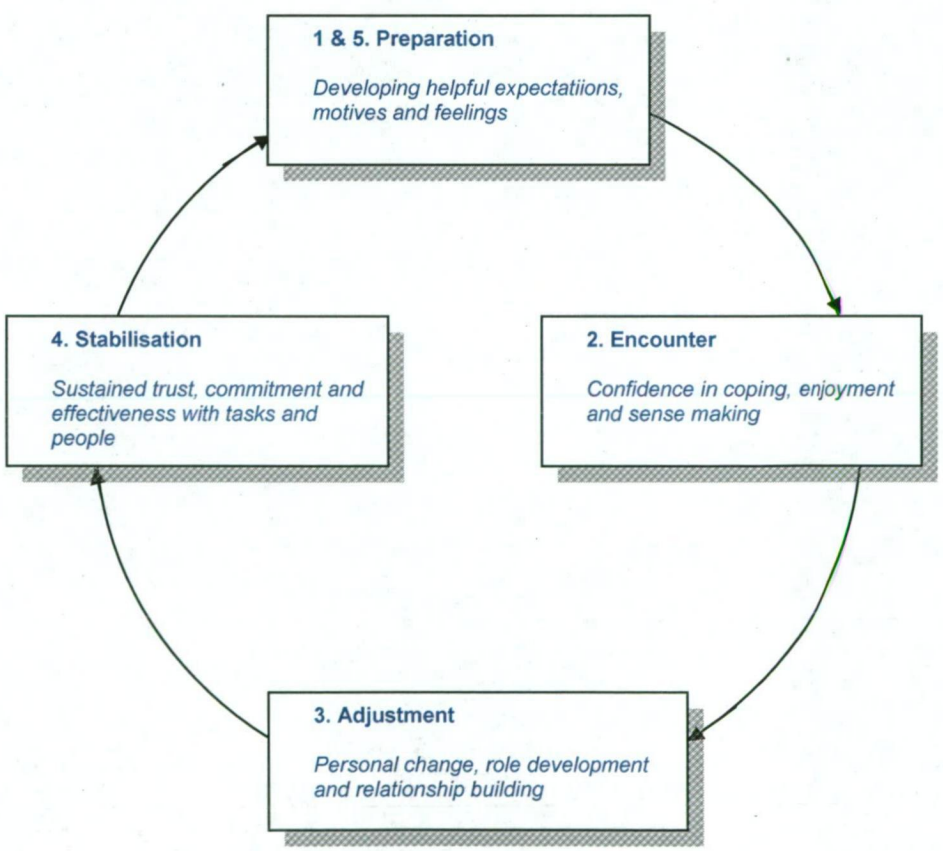

Figure 3.2 **Ascribed characteristics (adapted from Nicholson, 1987)**

The 16 data concepts were ascribed to the stages of the transition cycle by reference to the defining literature and informed by the underlying concept themes and coding arguments (see Table 3.4, pp. 66-68). This ascribing of concepts to the stages of the transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987), provided the opportunity to examine the concepts and underlying themes in the context of the transition stage and reflect on the processes at work (see Appendices P(i – iv) 'Concepts and Expanded Themes').

This process also enabled the discussion of the clustering of concepts within the stages, the clustering of participants in their categories (i.e. as thriving, surviving, or languishing) within the stages, and the timeframes around the resolution of the transition. The process also provided the clustering of participants to examine the taxonomy of the transition and the adjustment strategies described by Nicholson (1987), but with particular attention to the challenging circumstances surrounding the geographic dislocation.

This course of action was an iterative process where the literature informed the data themes; the data themes informed the concepts; the literature informed the ascribing of the concepts to the stages; the data informed the categorisation of participants within the concepts. The scoring and attribution to the categories (see appendices Q (i), Q (ii), Q (iii) and Q (iv), 'Attribution to Categories') described the characteristics of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation, and explored the processes that underpinned the transition and the trajectories of the transition for all of the categories.

3.7 Summary

This chapter described the theoretical perspectives that led to the selection of mixed method inquiry to answer the research question, i.e. what are the personal characteristics and processes of thriving in young men in geographically dislocating transitions?

The chapter described the careful planning through ethical considerations, sampling, and the selection of methods for the inquiry. It described the research design as being in two parts (1) establishing the nature of the participants group through the application of selected valid and reliable instruments, and (2) the exploration of the participant's views through a semi-structured interview process.

The chapter described the analysis process in regard to the interpretation of the instrument data, and the coding and iterative organisation of the semi-structured interview data. It provided the links to the selected theoretical constructs and the links to the supporting literature.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter details the results from the inquiry into the personal characteristics and processes of young men who thrive in periods of geographic dislocation. The chapter provides the details of the results of the mixed method inquiry and these are divided into three parts:

1. The nature of the participant group explored through the three dimensions of (a) general personality, (b) psychological well-being, and (c) a sense of coherence.

2. The contextual challenge and the dimensions of the stressor experience provide evidence of the impact of the challenge of dislocation.

3. The experience of the participant group explored through the semi-structured interview process that informed their adjustment to the geographically dislocating challenge. The themes, concepts and categories are drawn from of the qualitative interviews.

PART ONE

THE NATURE OF THE PARTICIPANT GROUP

A robust profile of the participants was obtained by the application of valid and reliable instruments in the first wave of the investigation. The results indicated the broad homogeneity of the cohort across a range of measures of well-being, personality and global orientation to stressors. These results provided the personal context of the experience and a baseline for the exploration of the contextual challenge and process of adjustment. The results have been summarised and the information presented in a graphic form to enable the identification of the salient characteristics of the participant group.

4.0 General personality

The results for this profile of personality were obtained through this 60-item scale, across five dimensions of the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992), designed to provide a brief, comprehensive measure of the five domains of personality. The greater proportion of the participants showed high homogeneity across the five sub-scales. The boundaries for the scores for the participants in each of the five dimensions were defined in this standardised instrument. The summarised results for the NEO-FFI appear below.

4.0.1 Neuroticism

The participant group generally scored low in this dimension. A significant number (54.1%) scored in the average range, indicating that they were generally calm and able to deal with stress, with occasional feelings of guilt anger or sadness. A further 12.5% clustered on the low boundary, indicating they were secure and generally relaxed under stressful conditions. This secure grouping accounted for 66.6% of the participants. Another 16.7% clustered on the high boundary indicating they were somewhat prone to feelings that are upsetting.

The outliers (16.7%) scored in the very high range indicating sensitive, emotional responses to stress and being prone to feelings that are upsetting.

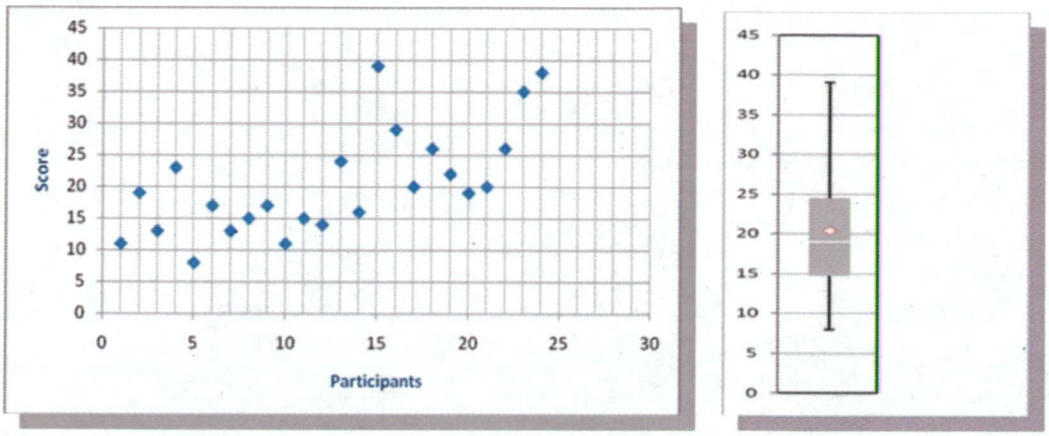

Figure 4.1 Neuroticism

4.0.2 Extraversion

In this dimension, the majority of participants (70.8%) registered in the very high or high range indicating they were high-spirited, extravert and outgoing. A further 25% returned an average score suggesting they were somewhat more moderate in their enthusiasm and value levels of privacy. One outlier returned a low score indicating a reserved and more introverted personality with few close friends.

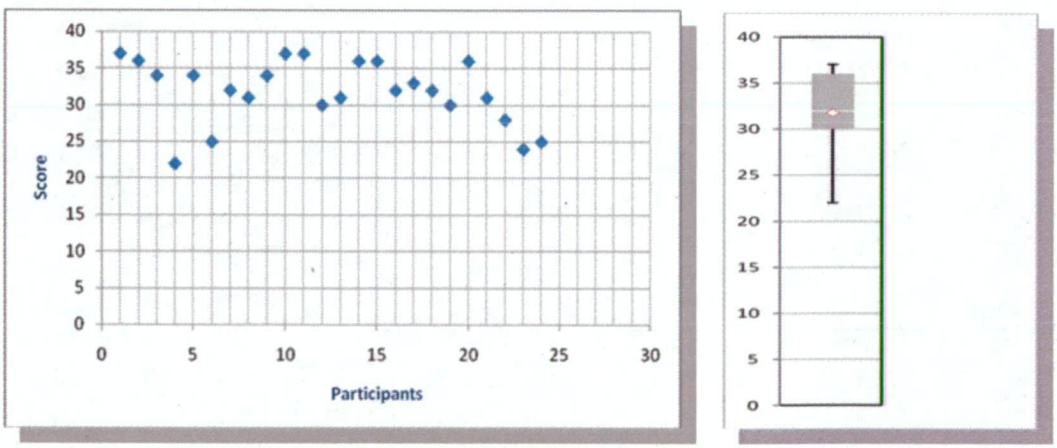

Figure 4.2 Extraversion

4.0.3 Openness

Results for Openness are consistently homogenous with 91.7% of the participants registering in the low or average category indicating they were

practical and traditional in their approach to challenges, but willing to consider new ways of doing things. Only two participants (8.3%) registered in the high category where their interests are broader.

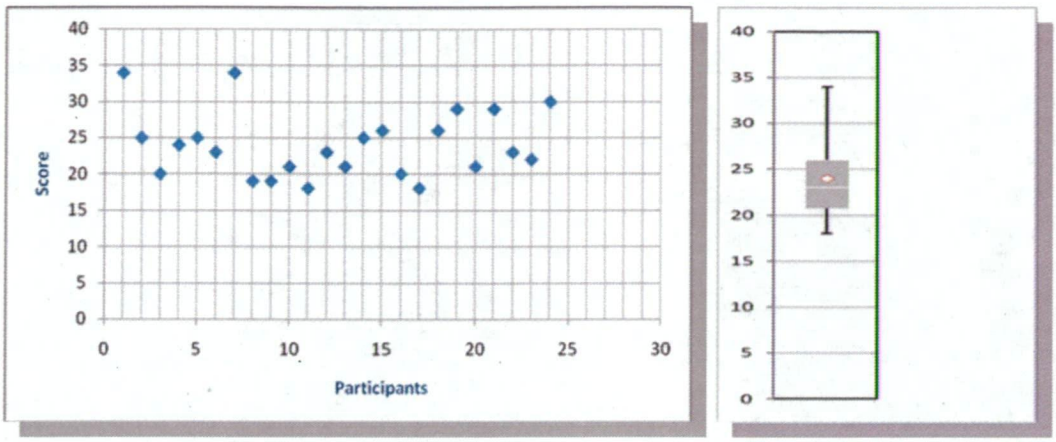

Figure 4.3 Openness

4.0.4 Agreeableness

In this dimension the participants clustered around the average category (41.7%) indicating a generally trusting and agreeable group who are competitive.

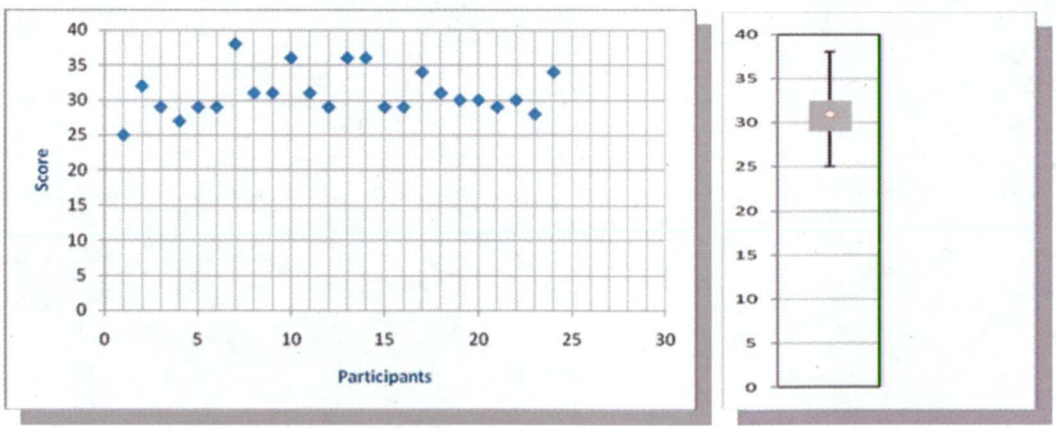

Figure 4.4 Agreeableness

A further 20.8% registered in the high category, albeit nearer the average boundary, suggesting this group was more eager to cooperate and avoid conflict. A further 37.5% registered in the low category, near to the boundary with the average cohort, indicating a more hard-headed and competitive group. In

general terms, homogeneity was apparent with all participants falling within a 13-point band width.

4.0.5 Conscientiousness

In this dimension, 58.3% registered in the average category, indicating they were dependable, and moderately well organised.

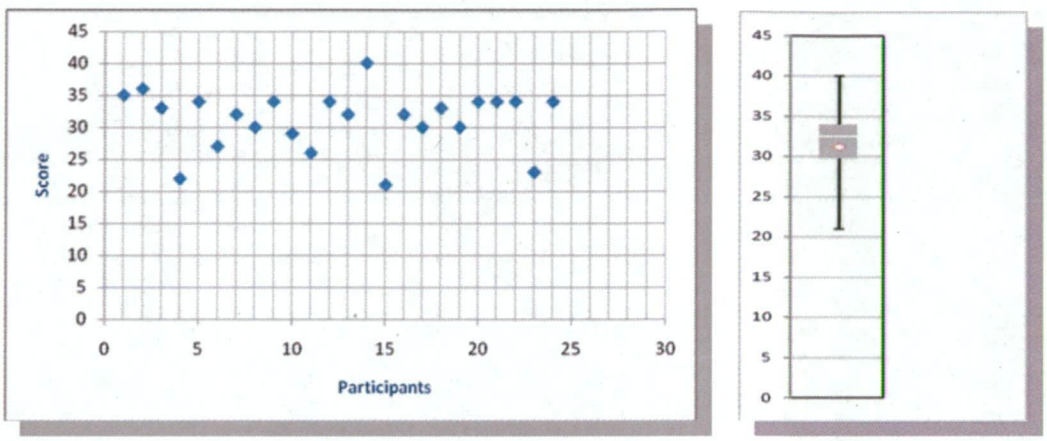

Figure 4.5 Conscientiousness

A further 37.5% registered in the low category, albeit close to the boundary with the average, indicating a more easygoing approach. Interestingly only one outlier registered in the high category, described as conscientious and well organised.

In summary the results provided a profile of personality across five major dimensions. The participant group were very similar in their presenting profile, scoring in a consistent pattern that underscored the homogeneity of the group. Outliers were consistent with the patterns already established.

4.1 Psychological well-being

The results from the Scales of Psychological Well Being (SPWB) (Ryff, 2003) were drawn from an 84-item scale that provided a measure of well-being across six dimensions. The greater proportion of the participants showed high homogeneity across the six sub-scales of the SPWB. A greater degree of variation was indicated in the areas of autonomy and self-acceptance where

outliers returned ratings lower than the group. Elsewhere, the participant group was remarkably homogeneous. The boundaries for the scores for the participants in each of the six dimensions were defined by this standardised instrument. The subscales results are presented below.

4.1.1 Self acceptance

In this dimension, 83.3% of the participant group lay in the High range with 4 outliers within a 6 points margin. A high rating in this subscale indicated positive attitudes towards self and acknowledgement of the multiple qualities that contribute to identity, together with positive attitudes about the past life. Drawing from the life-span theories, this dimension described the positive attitudes towards oneself that augur towards positive psychological functioning.

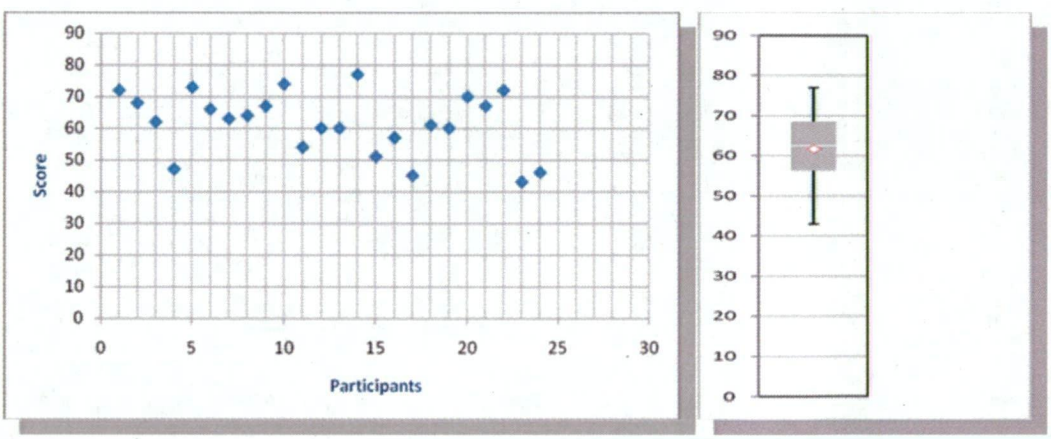

Figure 4.6 Self acceptance

4.1.2 Positive relations with others

All the participants lay in the High range for this dimension, indicating that they had the capacity for warm, satisfying relationships with others. Similarly they

showed empathy and were able to be concerned for the welfare of others.

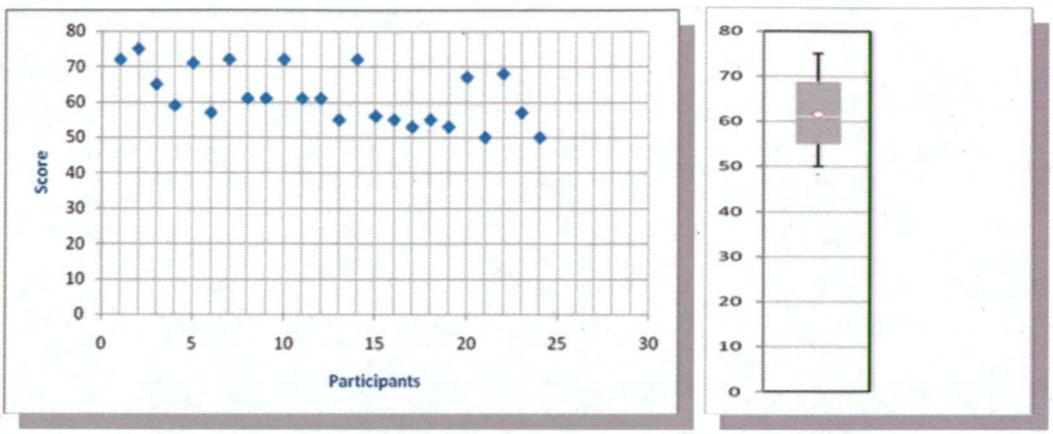

Figure 4.7 Positive relations with others

4.1.3 Autonomy

The participant group scored strongly in the High range (87.5%) for this dimension, indicating a strong sense of independence. The outliers were still within the moderate range, but may have relied more on the judgements of others and conformed to social pressures to think and act in certain ways.

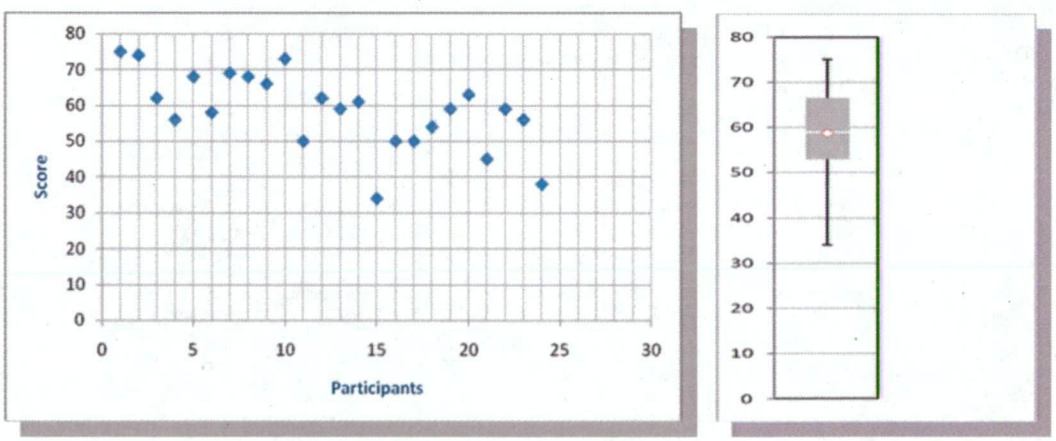

Figure 4.8 Autonomy

4.1.4 Environmental mastery

Again the group scored strongly in the High range (87.5%) for this dimension indicating a sense of competence in managing the contextual environment and the ability to control multidimensional activities and make use of the

surroundings. The outliers were in the moderate range and had some difficulty managing their 'world' and were less able to take advantage of opportunities.

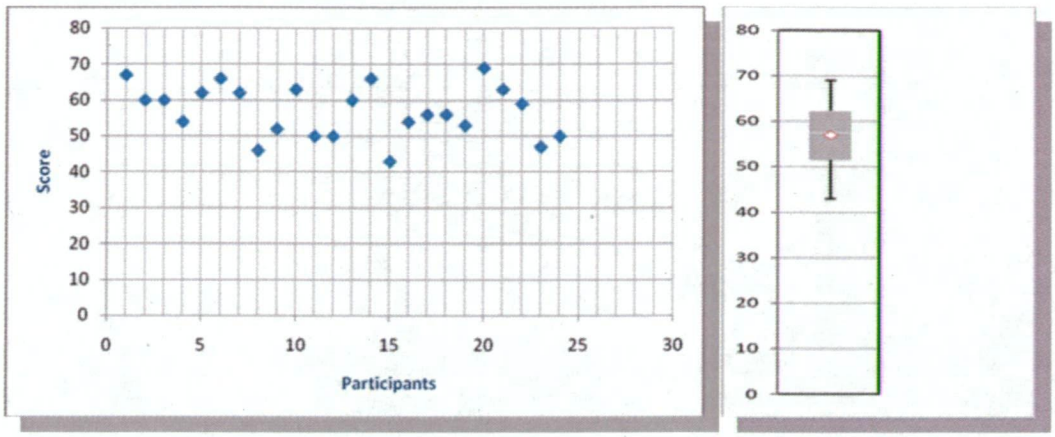

Figure 4.9 Environmental mastery

4.1.5 Purpose in life

All participants scored in the High range for this dimension, indicating positive goals in life and a sense of directedness. They held beliefs that gave purpose to their lives and were able to identify aims and objectives for living.

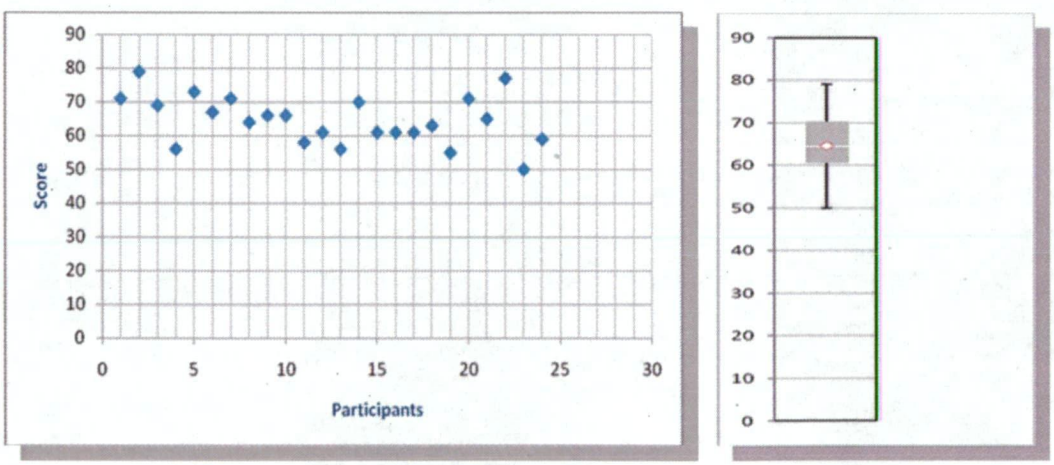

Figure 4.10 Purpose in life

4.1.6 Personal growth

Similarly, all participants scored in the High range for this dimension indicating a feeling of continued development and openness to new experiences. They had a

sense of realising their own potential and were able to change to accommodate more self-knowledge and effectiveness.

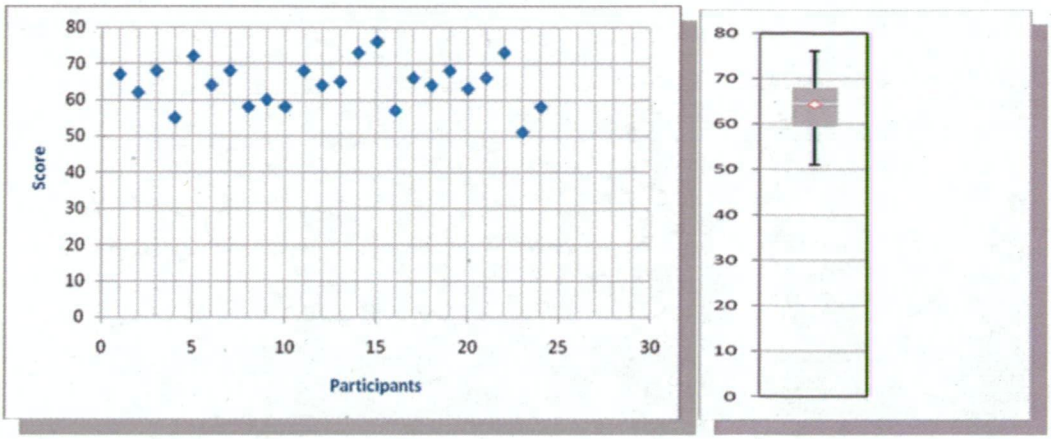

Figure 4.11 Personal growth

In summary, the participants scored consistently in the High range of the scales, indicating they were independent and able to regulate behaviour; could make effective use of opportunities; were able to learn from experience; understood the complexity of human relationships; had a sense of directedness and a positive attitude.

4.2 Personal orientation - Sense of Coherence

The results were obtained through the application of this 29-item scale, providing results across three dimensions (i.e. meaningfulness, manageability and comprehensibility) but contained within an overall Sense of Coherence (SOC). The greater proportion of the participants showed great similarity in their SOC score where 87.5% scored consistently in the High (137-155) and Very High (156+) categories. The scale indicated that the participants were able to select the particular coping strategy that was appropriate to deal with the challenge and were able to choose from a range of responses. They were more likely to mobilise the resources and more likely to feel a sense of engagement, commitment and willingness to cope with the challenge. The boundaries of what

was meaningful are flexible and adaptable rather than self-deceiving, and they saw the challenge as having parameters. They were able to choose the best strategy, were able to accord blame or responsibility calmly and accurately. The three low outliers (12.5%) were inclined to see the challenge as more burdensome and bringing the emotional distress that accompanies such a challenge, and regard chaos as inevitable. They were less likely to recognise the emotions but be overwhelmed by them; and were likely to blame others or 'luck' for their circumstance.

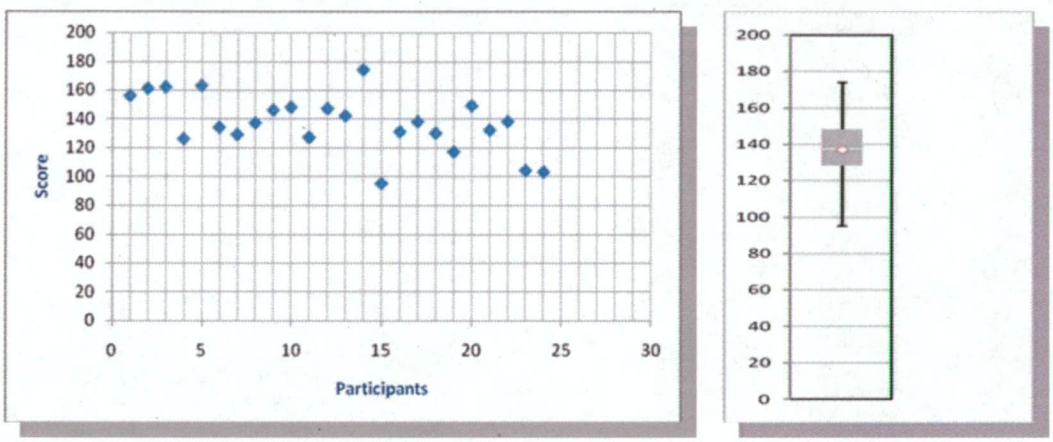

Figure 4.12 Sense of Coherence

In general the results provided a broad dispositional orientation to facing a challenge such as a geographical dislocation. The participant group were very similar in their orientation with 87.5% scoring in the high and very high range. Outliers were consistent with the patterns already established.

4.3 Summary

The data gained from the quantitative instruments were summarised in a summary page for each participant. This enabled the determination of the character of the participant group and also facilitated data management (Minichiello et al., 1999). The information was linked to the original data, and the summary page contained participant reference coding and scores and interpretation for the:

- General personality;
- Psychological wellbeing; and
- A sense of coherence.

Importantly, the participant group returned consistently similar ratings across all of the instruments. As a highly motivated group of elite athletes, they presented as generally calm and able to deal with stress; outgoing, active and high-spirited; practical but willing to consider new ways of doing things; generally trusting but competitive; and dependable and moderately well organised. While there was a range of scores, the outliers still fell within the general cluster of scores that identified them as part of an homogeneous group.

SPWB	SOC	NEO-FFI
83.3% - have a positive self image	87.5% - are able to select appropriate strategies and resources	83.3% - are secure
100% - are trusting / empathic		95.8% - are enthusiastic
87.5% - are independent		91.7% - are open and practical
87.5% - are task competent		100% - are cooperative / competitive
100% - have a sense of direction		95.8% - are relaxed and organised
100% - are open to learning		

Table 4.1 Summary of instrument data

High levels of homogeneity on all aspects of the instrument data was experienced, with only some variation in neuroticism (NEO-FFI) and autonomy (SPWB).

The instrument data were sufficiently robust and comprehensive to be able to describe the participant group as motivated, positively oriented and enthusiastic about the challenges ahead. Nevertheless, the challenge of the geographic dislocation and consequent adjustment difficulties limited their opportunity to thrive, and was not explained by the instrument data.

PART TWO

THE CONTEXTUAL ENVIRONMENT

Background information was obtained from administrative participants (n=8). The administrative staff provided a series of interviews (see Appendix L 'Staff Interview Schedule') where particular themes emerged in regard to the contextual environment. The themes were consistent across these views, and contributed to the challenging circumstances surrounding the geographically dislocating transition. These included:

4.4 The selection process

The randomness of the selection process was apparent, with limited focus on the welfare of the potential recruit and their particular needs. The priorities of the clubs were always about physical prowess and playing potential, rather than an acknowledgement of the circumstances that might enable the individual, e.g.:

> "...we'd seen him play and didn't even write a report about him, because he was slow but in the grand final he got a lot of possessions and he hit his targets and he came and didn't even play a game and he was picked 12 in the draft, so there are a few things that happened" (Administrator 01).

> "Well, you want to know about him, you don't necessarily need to know him as a person, but you need to know about him" (Administrator 06).

> "You have to pick three and you know you just go in and think 'oh crikey, I hope it doesn't get to... this is my top tier and this is my next tier, I hope it doesn't get to the stage where I have to pick one out of that'...but you have to do it" (Administrator 01).

The investment was based on the 'law of averages' rather than a detailed profile of the individual's needs, especially in dislocating circumstances, e.g.:

> "...so there haven't been too many abject failures, but you're always going to draft blokes who don't play a lot of league footy" (Administrator 06).

> "... the ones that you see that show a bit here and there and you research them as much as you can, quite often it's a punt" (Administrator 01).

The subjective nature of the recruiting process was apparent where the requirements of the club were prioritised, rather than an understanding of the particular transition for the recruit, e.g.:

> "...but the main random factor is that you don't know about the desire and the determination to do the work and cope with the work and all that sort of thing. We obviously don't meet everyone's parents, but we research the family background" (Administrator 06).

> "...they were the times when I was spending too much time on welfare and probably not having enough time to do the research that I have time for now, so you make some decisions that are "punts" and not research strongly enough" (Administrator 01).

> "A lot of how they feel is related to their personal success and the success of the team" (Administrator 03).

The vagaries of understanding the transition process and the lost opportunities for assisting young players through the stages were clear, e.g.:

> "It's the weakness of all of us that the perception is not necessarily the truth, but some blokes are not that confident of doing extra because they

think...you know the Australian state of mind... oh he's a smartarse, he's a show-off" (Administrator 06).

"Most 'hit the wall' during June and July when the days are short, the weather is cold and the accumulated tiredness may be affected by injury and/or recuperation" (Administrator 03).

4.4.1 The transition to a new environment

It was evident in the data that the club's agenda and time frames for conforming to the new environment were inflexible, and many participants suffered the consequences, e.g.:

"They (the players) have to prove themselves and earn respect and the club takes responsibility for this on a number of fronts, some of which they do well, and others not so well" (Administrator 02).

"Pre-season training is very demanding and the players are usually too tired to feel homesick or to worry about much other than how tired they are" (Administrator 06).

"Acceptance into the club is not as easy as it looks as there is a bit of a hierarchy within the player groups that is hard to crack if you're not a star player" (Administrator 03).

4.4.2 The competing interests of the new environment

The inability of the clubs to distinguish between the needs of the club and the psychosocial needs of the players was indicated, e.g.:

"You've got to think that they're blessed, first of all to be as healthy as they are, and secondly to have the ability to do what they're doing. If they don't count their blessings from time to time, well they should..." (Administrator 01).

"...it's not necessarily support but the right kind of support that is required...it's a balance between dependence and independence and that the club finds this balance difficult to get right" (Administrator (05).

"...the reality is that while the stars are very well paid, the vast majority of players are 'making up the numbers" (Administrator 04).

"...players face the same social issues as the rest of society but at an accelerated rate and under scrutiny" (Administrator 07).

"...there is considerable focus on 'the self' and this is affected by perceptions of success, injury and form on and off the field" (Administrator 04).

"The honeymoon of being drafted lasts for quite a while and the players are usually quite buoyant for the first few months" (Administrator 03).

4.4.3 The gap between the experience and the evidence

The difficulties the clubs had meeting the expectations of the AFL in terms of putting a competitive team on the field, and addressing the concerns of the players and support staff, was an ongoing concern, e.g.:

"...the club is responsible for the support of the players and responsible for their growth and development... but they're [the players] are so naïve..." (Administrator 08).

"...there's a huge physical change to the new club environment and pressure to balance the expectations associated with football at this level" (Administrator 04).

"...the second-year blues are all about not making it in the short-term" (Administrator 04).

> "There is also a dichotomy between "getting a game" and the confidence to perform at the expected levels. This tends to impact on the player's self-esteem and also on their ability to make friends and integrate the social culture of the place" (Administrator 06).

In summary, the clubs' measurement of success was an arbitrary measurement of time and performance. It made no account of the individual requirements or processes and provided a 'blunt instrument' for enhancing the opportunities of the participants to succeed. The routines attached to recruitment were similarly short-sighted, where participants were expected to adjust to the rigors of the new environment through commitment and perseverance.

The clubs' frustration with the apparent randomness of the process highlighted the lack of evidence and insight into the personal characteristics and processes of the transition, and the particular challenges associated with geographic dislocation.

The participants' frustration and disillusionment was attributed partly to the lack of meaningful direction given by the clubs (a product of their anecdotal approach to the issues surrounding the transition) and their lack of insight and understanding in regard to the characteristics, processes and trajectories surrounding the transition.

4.5 Impact of the challenge of dislocation

In this participant group 70.8% recorded significant dislocation, indicating feelings of apprehension, insecurity and unpreparedness for the challenge ahead. A further 20.8% recorded a high GDS score, suggesting elevated levels of apprehension and feeling the challenge is unmanageable; being pessimistic about the chances of success and feeling insecure. In particular, the results provided a measure of the impact of geographic dislocation across eight dimensions. The final tally for the GDS is shown in Figure 4.13 below.

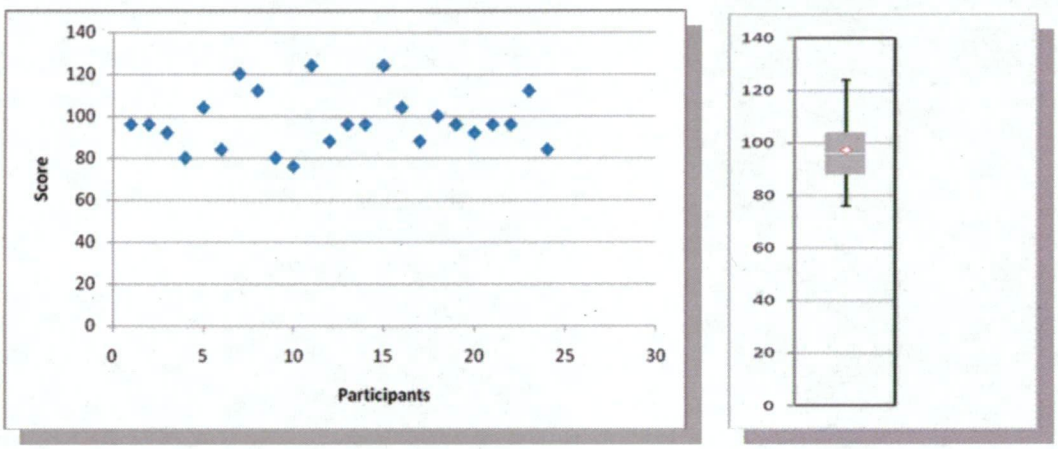

Figure 4.13 **Geographic Dislocation Scale**

Overall the cohort was considerably challenged by the geographically dislocating transition and the outcomes from their efforts to thrive in these new conditions were not fully explained by the instrument data. In particular, this was indicated by the uncomfortable relationship between the apparent homogeneity of the participant group, and the disparate outcomes measured by "success" at the participating clubs. The dislocating transition and the opportunities to thrive were communally experienced, but with a range of incongruent outcomes.

PART THREE

The participants' views

The semi-structured interview explored the experience of the geographic dislocation and the process of transition. The interviews were conducted in a quiet, private setting within the participant's club precinct and took approximately one hour to complete. The participants were scheduled over a series of days with all the interviews taking place in late morning or early afternoon. The semi-structured interviews followed the interview schedule (see Appendix K) that was designed to elicit detailed information in regard to the participants' experience of the geographically dislocating transition.

4.6 Transcription of interviews and initial coding

While the narrative structure of the interview was guided by the semi-structured process, the responses ranged across anticipated themes and the emergent coding was drawn from all parts of the interview. The consistency of insights resulted in a large set of themes, albeit ranging over a variety of topics.

The initial coding themes were speculative and numerous, and often reflected in the guiding literature (e.g. thriving, transition, dislocation). Nevertheless, further themes were drawn from the participants' expansive and wide-ranging responses to the interview prompts and the invitations to expand on issues that arose in the interview discussion.

Rather than a focussed interrogation of the narrative data, the themes that emerged were named and reserved for consideration; combining or collapsing as similarities were identified. The emerging coding themes were applied to extended text as well as single word responses, and the contextual subtleties

explored for clarity, connections and relationships. The initial coding found indications of:

- Aspiration and certainty about the next phase of their journey;
- Competence to make the transition;
- Instincts about what is involved in making the transition successfully;
- Self efficacy in regard to their particular capacity to achieve their goals;
- Secure attachments and available resources for the transition.

Emergent coding themes were also associated with perceptions of the experience including:

- Luck as a pivotal discriminator;
- Being able to prepare for the transition;
- Access to and resourcing mentors through the process; and
- Acts of discovery in the new requirements of their changed roles.

Self-reflection was encouraged throughout the semi-structured interview process and initially coded through a prompt to participants to describe "...what does it say about you?" The consequent coding themes explored the meaningfulness of the experience, the ability to identify and muster resources, and coping strategies that ranged from a dedicated sense of purpose through to resignation.

The participants were able to identify their experiences in the transition and were able to accurately reflect on their experiences in considerable detail. They were able to apply timeframes and identify markers that described their journey through the transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987) that enabled the accurate ascription of concepts from the study to the stages of the transition.

4.7 General themes (descriptive integration)

Themes produced in the first round of analysis were examined and general (underlying) themes generated to allow the integration of information. The general themes provided an on-coding opportunity to expand the coding range rather than a discriminatory interrogation of the data. These general themes and coding arguments are presented in Table 4.2 below.

Underlying themes	*Coding argument*	Underlying themes	*Coding argument*
• Learning lessons • Long term plans • Unfolding dreams • Whatever it takes	• *Positive self concepts* • *Capacity for recovery*	• A slave to the system • Listen and learn • Seeing the big picture • Whatever works • New confidence	• *Engagement* • *Commitment* • *New directions* • *Leaving the old and embracing the new*
• The right message • New independence • The initial shock • Getting the hang of it all • Working through problems	• *Life events* • *Purposeful* • *Readiness* • *Uncertainty*	• Mentors • Friends • Family backup	• *Support systems* • *What is going on?* • *Stability* • *Meaning* • *Sense of direction*
• Competence • Seizing opportunities • Resignation • Luck • Blind obedience • Mimicking	• *Positive outcomes* • *Having or lacking insight* • *Learning.*	• Altruistic • Keen to please • Calculating • Competitive • Organised /confused • Resourceful / less exacting	• *Agreeableness* • *Awareness* • *Clear thinking* • *Muddled*
• Energetic • Enthusiastic • Optimistic • Measured • Withdrawn	• *Confident or* • *Tentative.* • *Clarity of purpose* • *Uncertainty*	• Hanging on to concerns • Able to let go • Impulsive • Considered • Loss of person • Loss of place	• *Defensive strategies or* • *Positive strategies* • *Control or* • *Uncertainty*
• What do I do? • I know what to do • What is going on? • I know what is going on	• *Comprehensible* • *Understandable*	• How does this work? • I know how this works • I can do this. • I can't do this	• *Manageable*
• I don't know why I'm doing this • I know why I'm doing this	• *Meaningful*	• Positive acceptance of change • Open to new experiences • Draw meaning from experience • Order from chaos	• *Personal growth* • *Thriving through learning*
• Independent • Self determined	• *Autonomous activity*	• Trusting • Understanding	• *Positive relationship building*
• Loneliness • Camaraderie • Family backup • Isolation	• *Seclusion* • *Involvement*	• Visualised pathways • Making sense of it all • Life on hold • Measured progress	• *Trust and commitment* • *Hesitation*

Table 4.2 **Underlying themes and coding arguments**

These underlying themes (see Appendix P (i-iv) 'Coding Density') provided the scaffolding for the development of a suite of concepts that informed an understanding of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation.

4.7.1 Specific concepts and categories

The concepts were developed through assessing the individual participants' responses and through the clusters of participants. The initial coding of transcripts resulted in the generation of approximately 200 general themes. These were grouped by association and where general themes represented points at either end of a continuum (e.g. 'not knowing what to do' / 'I don't know what is going on'; and 'knowing what to do'/ 'I know what is going on' might form the complete data set for an over-arching theme in 'comprehensibility'). Other themes were merged when the definitions for the coding were regarded as synonymous. This occurred as a result of the iterative process of coding the data and the non-discriminatory creation of general themes as a free-coding process, e.g. the concept of 'support systems' was a merging of general coding themes for: (a) family and friends; (b) camaraderie; (c) family backup; (d) mentors; and (e) friends. Similarly the concept of 'engagement' was a merging of (a) a slave to the system; (b) listen and learn; (c) seeing the big picture; (d) whatever works; and (e) new confidence. The final suite of 16 concepts was the result of an iterative process of coding and recoding; drawing similar themes towards one-another and searching for the over-arching definitional meaning that provided agreement.

The final 16 concepts were (1) readiness for the challenge; (2) motivation; (3) positive planning; (4) comprehensibility; (5) gaining confidence; (6) sense making; (7) meaningfulness; (8) engagement (9) support systems; (10) role development; (11) manageability; (12) personal development; (13) relationship building; (14) environmental mastery; (15) trust and commitment and (16)

discretion. These concepts allowed the categorisation of participants within the coded item based on the attributed participant responses of *'weak, moderate,* and *strong'*.

4.8 Concepts

4.8.1 Concept 1 Readiness for the Challenge

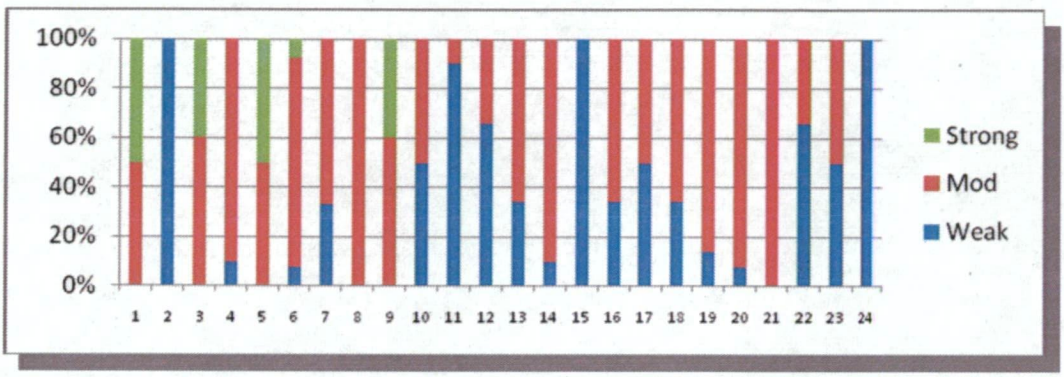

Figure 4.14 Readiness for the challenge

Definition: Being able to identify the challenges ahead.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (had difficulty identifying the challenges ahead - *enthusiasm **without** insight*), moderate (being able to identify the challenges ahead – *enthusiasm and **some** insight*), or strong (being able to identify the challenges ahead and having a plan to deal with them – *enthusiasm **and** insight*).

Readiness for the Challenge explored the participants' new independence and their ability to work through the challenging transition in a purposeful way (high scoring). It explored their ability to 'weigh up' their initial reactions and to find ways of shaping a useful framework for negotiating the geographically dislocating transition process.

Strong response participants were engaged and insightful and able to identify opportunities, e.g.:

"Yeah, it was sort of pretty familiar...most guys who were in that system, have got a pretty good idea of sort of what the deal is..." (Participant 05).

"Mum rang them up and talked to them, then I went down and met them; it was the best decision I could have made" (Participant 03).

"...yeah, but it was good to have other guys around you that were going through the same thing... and you could always sit with them ...and they would be having the same thoughts as you... or you could ask them something and not feel like a [fool]" (Participant 01).

Moderate response participants were aware of the challenge, but had less insight into the transition process, e.g.:

"I think it's hard to put all your energy into that. I think at this time of year it's too hard, like, our training schedules... it's just out of control and it's just getting worse" (Participant 24).

"I'm quite surprised, actually, and, yeah, just learning to deal with things physically. Yeah, learning a lot about myself, what I could and can't now do and how to handle things as well, I guess, is the main thing. And I guess previously I just go and do it without thinking, but now I take the time to just sit down and think whether...think if it is right or wrong, what will the consequences be?" (Participant 22).

Weak response participants described the experience as confused and bewildering. They were inclined to everything possible to succeed rather than being selective, e.g.:

"I guess I didn't have too much of an idea what was meant to happen or how..." (Participant 02).

"I remember thinking I was pretty surprised but actually going through a phase when I was thinking I didn't want to do it and I actually had two or three days where I was struggling with it and I didn't want to leave my girlfriend, my family, didn't want to do all that sort of stuff so finally the position I wanted to be in two years and a year earlier, I was in and where I would have taken it by the scruff of the neck and gone... but I was actually having second thoughts about whether I wanted to live that still and I wasn't really committed in what I was doing anymore ..."
(Participant 11).

4.8.2 Concept 2 Motivation

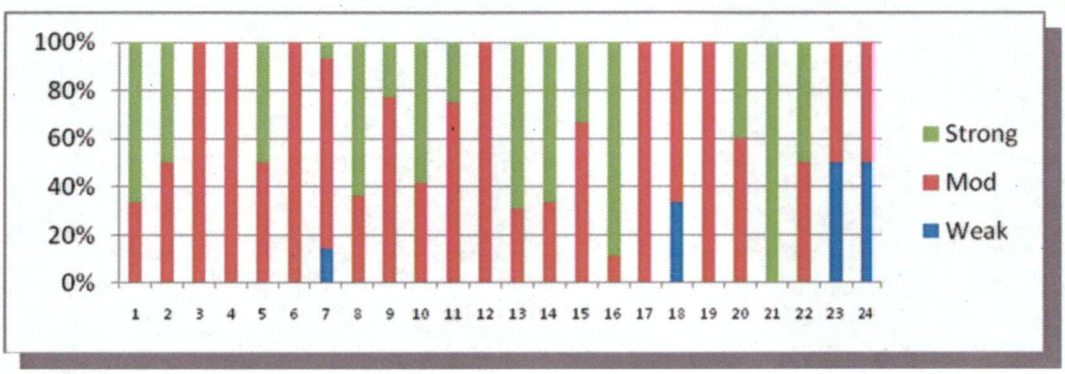

Figure 4.15 Motivation

Definition: Optimistic and motivated responses, rather than compliance.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (being withdrawn and compliant), moderate (wrestling with competing interests), or strong (being energetic and motivated).

The participant group was highly motivated and responded enthusiastically to the challenge. The discriminating aspects of this concept became apparent in the preparations for the transition and the application of resources to accommodate the psychological need to plan for the future.

It explored the participants' feelings towards the imminent dislocating transition, the levels of confidence described by the participants, and the strategies for overcoming lingering apprehensions. Participants were identified as *'strong'* if they could demonstrate strong associations with the positive aspects of this concept, i.e. confident, hopeful and exhibiting proactive coping strategies.

Strong response participants were able to harness the energy and focus on the tasks ahead (both immediate and long term) and could articulate their ideas for the future, e.g.:

> "If we had a weights session, I'd sort of stick around for another hour... so I just used to stick around to do a few extras" (Participant 16).

> "I'm pretty laid back. I don't know. Like I don't just go with the flow... [It's] pretty easy to adjust in my surroundings... if they want me to do something I'm happy to do that, but if I really don't want to do it I won't do it, sort of thing. I won't, get...like be pushed to do something I don't want to do" (Participant 21).

> "I think I always had an underlying confidence that I could; you know that I could do quite well... I think with a bit of time and, you know, you start doing things well... you get a bit of feedback that you're doing okay, it gives you a lot of confidence" (Participant 05).

Moderate response participants were more able to describe the experience, but somewhat overwhelmed by the experience. They were motivated, but less sure of the direction, e.g.:

> "(The coach) didn't really give you that much confidence, like, you didn't really talk to anyone...so, I didn't really know where I was going kind of in the football way..." (Participant 18).

"Ahhh, yeah, it's pretty good...ummm I do enjoy it...sometimes it gets ummm...probably a bit frustrating and sort of want to go out on your own" (Participant 04).

"To a certain extent I knew you'd probably have to work hard and all the fitness stuff, but different training techniques was...a bit surprised and that sort of stuff, so it was a bit of both, but more so that it was just one mind-blowing sort of experience" (Participant 13).

"...they say that they want you to do something outside of footy to break it up a little bit and to give you something after footy, but... then if you don't put enough into footy that's a bad thing as well" (Participant 07).

"I never wanted to be one of those guys who were, you know, just full on footy, I always wanted something else there as well... 'cos I'd seen those people just put everything into it and then just get nothing from it and then afterwards just be left just not knowing who they are and where they want to go" (Participant 10).

"...they put you with a player to help you settle in... they show you around and tell you what to do, which is good... it's pretty self-explanatory, really, just follow in the older player's footsteps, whatever they do, you do" (Participant 20).

Weak response participants were unsure of what was able to be achieved and were circumspect about the goals ahead, e.g.:

"I didn't have to have a manager in the first year, my mum just came around and there was nothing to...it was all very basic for the first couple of years. I wasn't...you know I wasn't going to get into, like the media. I'm not really into that sort of stuff anyway, so it was good for me. I didn't

want to get into that hype and all that bullshit that goes on with the draftees and all that, yeah, it was all pretty quick" (Participant 23).

"Yeah, I'm not the most - I've never been the most confident, didn't grow up the most confident person, so I really didn't know" (Participant 24).

4.8.3 Concept 3 Positive Planning

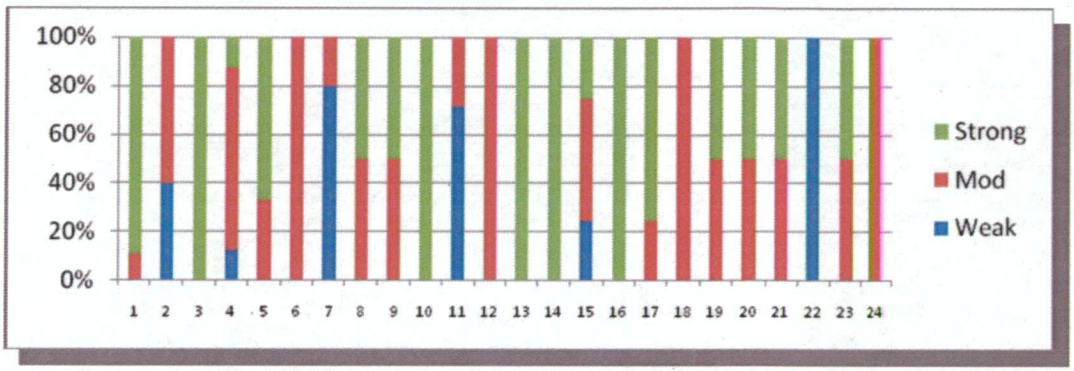

Figure 4.16 Positive planning

Definition: Positive expectations rather than laboured concern.

Guide: The coding is based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (laboured concerns), moderate (wrestling with competing interests), or strong (positive expectations).

Positive planning provided insight into the strategies exercised by the participants in anticipation of the geographically dislocating transition, particularly in regard to their ability to let go of concerns, and how well considered was their decision making.

Strong response participants could demonstrate secure associations with the positive aspects of this concept, i.e. assuredness, positive detachment, and confident planning, e.g.:

"If they want to hype me up, they can, but it's not something I don't have control of... that's just part of the way things happen... I know a lot more about myself..." (Participant 03).

"Well it's still a cut-throat business and you do what you can to help the team, but you also...the bottom line is the team success... you've got to make sure that your success is ensured as well" (Participant 01).

"Yeah, now...now that I'm feeling pretty good. I'm feeling very comfortable around here. I know the guys really well. I've got a lot of respect" (Participant 16).

Moderate response participants were more circumspect about the experience and felt their way through the process. Their expectations were often coloured by observations and they wrestled with competing interests, e.g.:

"It's all part of...you know, you want to be structured and you want to be told what to do a lot, but personally I always prefer just to go out, make my own mistakes" (Participant 14).

"Ummm, no not really, I mean we've had a couple of tough times over the period that we've been here, but we've had sort of times where we've been really happy with...and obviously the first couple of years you tend to get homesick" (Participant 06).

"You do and you don't. You feel like you are, but you know you're not going to play and you sort of feel a bit left out a bit, yeah" (Participant 17).

Weak response participants laboured with their concerns and struggled with the new responsibilities. They felt compromised by the new expectation levels and lacked the confidence to seek support from others, e.g.:

"...I guess with the stuff that was getting sent over I would've done that better...like I didn't pack my runners, I thought that they'd be here when I got here, so I didn't have runners for the first couple of weeks which was a bit...looked a bit silly... me walking around in bare feet" (Participant 02).

"I guess rebelled against all of it... I didn't want footy to take over my life again because it burned me before and I didn't want to put everything into it...ummm, it's such a hard...I mean even now I still don't, don't really know what direction I want to go in, you know I don't know if I want to have a real crack again this year... or I want to give footy away" (Participant 07).

"Oh, you're obviously a bit unsure, like you're...sort of wait[ing] for someone else to follow their lead sort of thing... you sort of... just watch other people...I did... I watched people pretty closely and noticed how they went about things and tried to copy... do the things like they do" (Participant 04).

4.8.4 Concept 4 Comprehensibility

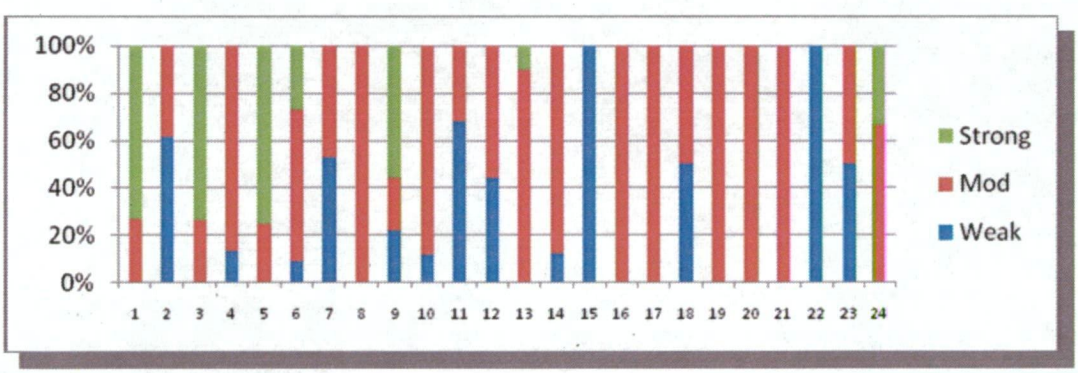

Figure 4.17 Comprehensibility

Definition: Awareness of what is required.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (not aware of what was required), moderate (some awareness of what was required), or strong (acutely aware of what was required).

Strong response participants could demonstrate secure associations with the positive aspects of this concept, i.e. a positive vision, and understanding what was required. They were acutely aware (high scoring) of the process on which

they were embarking and made specific requests for information in regard to what was required of them and the timeframes involved. They were keen to engage the new environment and not deterred by a lack of information, e.g.:

> "It was good to have other guys around you that were going through the same thing... and you could always sit with them... and they would be having the same thoughts as you... or you could ask them something and not feel like a [fool]" (Participant 03).

> "I think I know my part in the team and I think... yeah, I think I know what is required and I think... I know that I can produce it so, ummm I think that gives me a lot of confidence that I have" (Participant 05).

> "... well it was uncomfortable at the start but they were...well they still are, they're great people and ahhh I suppose the mother is now, like my second mum... every time I see her, she's just full of life and she just like seeing your mum again you know... as soon as I walked in there they were just great to me, they did everything for me and ummm, I can't thank them enough actually...a couple of blokes haven't been so lucky...I was just really lucky" (Participant 01).

Moderate response participants were less aware of what was required of them and how to prepare for the transition. Nevertheless they were keen to learn and ready to take the chances offered to them and wrestle with the challenge, e.g.:

> "Yeah, it was pretty dramatic it [the draft process] even went so quick, so much that you just kind of... everything fell into place and you get told to do it, so you did it. I don't think there was... no argument or anything like that; it was what I knew, I think" (Participant 19).

"... so I was sort of ready for a change anyway, if I was doing that I probably would've moved out of home anyway and stuff like that, so being a couple of years older definitely helped" (Participant 17).

Weak response participants were unaware, sometimes blissfully, of what was required of them and were only able to engage in the transition process in the most mechanical of ways. They struggled with the process from the outset and information was confusing and bewildering, e.g.:

"...like you come here to training, and you try to be happy but deep down inside... it is [a] pretty big world being in the AFL. You know, you'll see someone's looking at you and you go 'is he not working hard?' or 'what am I doing here?'...it puts thoughts in your head sometimes" (Participant 02).

"But as time moves on and everything's changed and everything like that I realised every time I go out... I do exactly the same things I did when I was 18, 19, that's eat, sleep, go partying, you know, get up mid afternoon, go again" (Participant 15).

4.8.5 Concept 5 Gaining Confidence

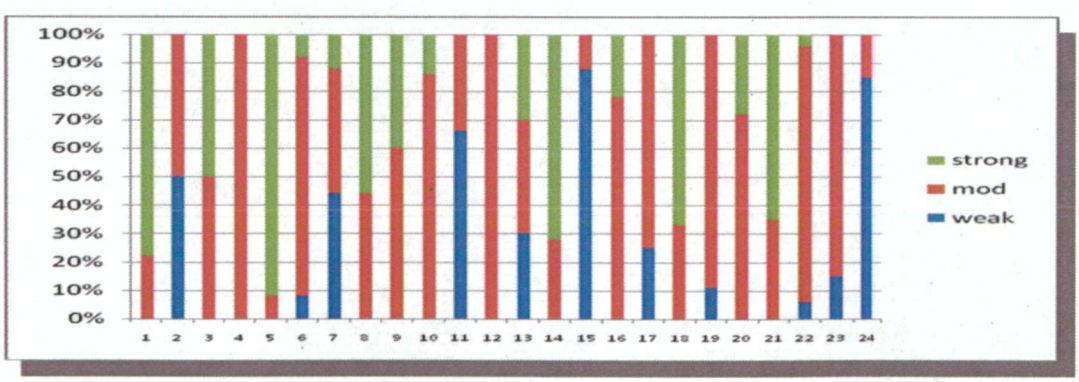

Figure 4.18 Gaining confidence

Definition: "Developing the understanding of what is required and how to get there and the importance of positive self-concepts to negotiate transitions".

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (not confident about the next step and a lack of real clarity about direction), moderate (emerging confidence and a general idea of direction), or strong (being confident about what is required and a real sense of direction). The participants were in a position to build on their experience and learning to negotiate the challenge.

Strong response participants could describe increased confidence and learning, especially in regard to their personal journey rather than the collective experience, e.g.:

> "Blokes help other blokes as much as they can, but...ahhh...there's a certain point where you've got to say a couple of trick are my tricks and you can't have them" (Participant 01).
>
> "I think it's just...the pressures sort of kept building from there but I think pressure is a lot of what you put on yourself, like I mean I don't really tend to listen to what people outside the place really have to say" (Participant 06).
>
> "It's all part of, you know, you want to be structured and you want to be told what to do a lot, but personally I always prefer just to go out, make my own mistakes" (Participant 14).
>
> "If they want me to do something I'm happy to do that, but if I really don't want to do it I won't do it... I won't get... be pushed to do something I don't want to do" (Participant 18).

Moderate response participants were less confident about the encounter and were still searching for direction in regard to the details of what was required of them, e.g.:

"You've got to change your whole way of thinking to the team and do the team thing really" (Participant 20).

"The first year for me ... it was all over the shop" (Participant 23).

"It's totally different to what you think it is" (Participant 13).

Weak response participants had a lack of confidence about the future and about the experience of the transition. They were unable to find a frame of reference for their transitional journey and were locked into dysfunctional coping, e.g.:

"Yeah, I think when I first came over... I think a few of the boys thought...'cos I didn't expect, I didn't know what to expect... I guess I wasn't working hard enough, but I thought I was working hard enough I guess..." (Participant 02).

"I remember missing sessions and that, for a month because I couldn't... because I wasn't used to a routine... I remember missing sessions and you know, the first and second time were okay, but then the third time you were called in by the coach and you know [being told]... 'grow up!' and copping all this sort of stuff" (Participant 11).

4.8.6 Concept 6 Sense Making

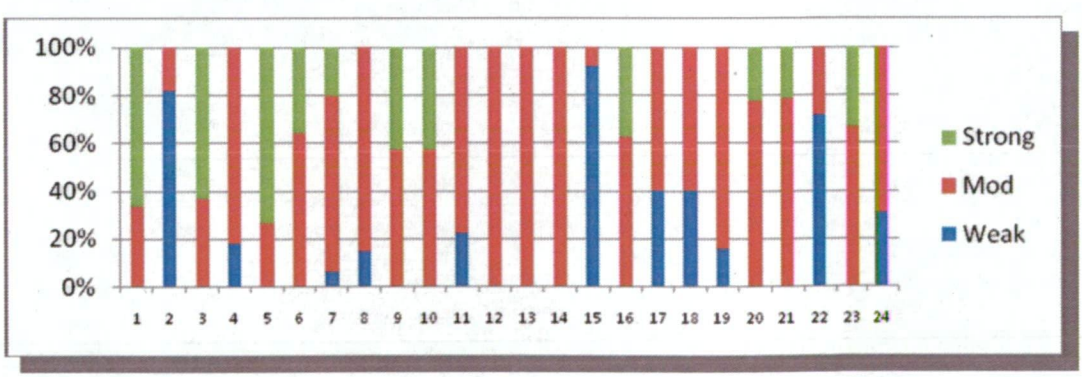

Figure 4.19 Sense making

Definition: Keenly experiencing the transition rather than being disillusioned.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (being disillusioned), moderate (wrestling with competing interests), or strong (keenly experiencing the journey). This discriminating characteristic describes the ability of the participants to make sense of the transition process and outcomes as they negotiate the dislocating experience.

Strong response participants made good sense of the transition and their place in the cycle. They had clarity of purpose, meaningful engagement, a commitment to the process, and were able to describe a clear purpose and strategy for this stage of their journey, e.g.:

> "I think the pressure thing, and I mean a bit of pressure's not all so bad at times" (Participant 05).
>
> "When you're actually going through it with someone else, 'cos I mean it was obviously a struggle... thinking it was a struggle... I wasn't doing it by myself, I was doing it with another bloke or two other blokes...so I remember thinking we're all in this together and , ummm yeah we got through it" (Participant 01).
>
> "I know a lot more about myself... I'm moving away from having potential and more towards having to produce" (Participant 03).
>
> "[I] went and set some goals out... the first time I pretty much set goals... I'd always wanted the best out of myself and I've always been really competitive" (Participant 16).
>
> "Not copying... just watched them and watched guys like [player named] and just... the blokes who I thought were where I wanted to be... I just

sort of watched them and watched them train, just like a sponge I guess, yeah, just sort of watched them" (Participant 23).

"I think with a bit of time and, you know, you start doing things well...you get a bit feedback that you're doing okay ...it gives you a lot of confidence" (Participant 06).

Moderate response participants made less sense of the transition and were less able to discern the purpose of the demands being made upon them. They struggled for clarity of direction although they were beginning to understand the range of experiences involved in the transition, and were inclined to see the transition and the challenge as a single entity, rather than a suite of demands, e.g.:

"I mean I don't know about the other young guys, but I got down there and probably for the first two months hadn't spoken to [the coach] or got any money or anything. So I was pretty much down then and too scared to say anything about that and living off nothing..." (Participant 10).

"I think I've changed since I've come up here, just because I hadn't moved out of home and stuff like that, just living out of home changed (me) a bit, just grown up and had to do things I'd never done before, like cooking , doing my own washing and stuff like that..." (Participant 17).

"Yeah it was like... leaving, leaving all your friends and starting from scratch" (Participant 20).

"Although I did get drafted, the mentality of me going there was just to see how it all was, experience it and then...maybe next year, get the same opportunity, but to know what it's all about" (Participant 13).

"I've just realised now after the experiences I've had... it's really important to get out of the fishbowl" (Participant 14).

"I don't think you're ever ready for it...you think you know what's expected, but you don't know it's going to be that flat out 24/7" (Participant 20).

Weak response participants found the transition experience difficult to interpret and there were few markers to assist them make sense of the journey. They were confused and mimicked others to try a make sense of their experiences, e.g.:

"I guess I didn't have too much of an idea exactly what was meant to happen or how ..." (Participant 02)

"... just adjusting and making the changes and learning what's required and now I'm just trying to put them in place...like finding some friends, 'cos when you first get here, you're friendly with everyone, but you're not really friends with anyone" (Participant 02).

"I would never... being a young guy, I would never have had the guts to talk to one of the assistant (coaches) to find out what's required" (Participant 15).

"Yeah... ummm, I reckon it was a bit blurred when I first came over" (Participant 02).

4.8.7 Concept 7 Meaningfulness

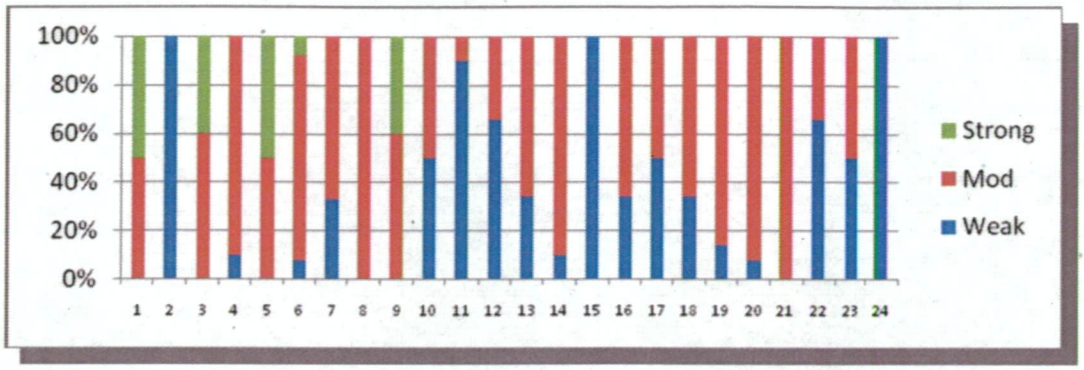

Figure 4.20 Meaningfulness

Definition: Awareness of why they are engaged in the required activities.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (not aware of why they are doing this), moderate (some awareness of why they are doing this), or strong (acutely aware of why they are doing this). This discriminating characteristic focussed on the ability of the participants to find meaning in the tasks of the transition. Like Antonovsky's (1998) 'meaningfulness' the challenge must be worthy of engagement, but these motivated individuals were required to engage and find meaning in their efforts.

Strong response participants were able to attach meaning to their efforts to negotiate the transition and devote the appropriate resources to the task, and why it was required, e.g.:

> "...comparing notes and just seeing what was happening and ahhhh, it was just...it was an easy transition to come down and be with some of my friends ummm, I had no problems" (Participant 01).

> "I suppose it was good in my first year to realise that it is a hard business and you have to be disciplined...yeah like I suppose I was lucky in my

first year when we came in...it was ummm batten the hatches, head down, bum up..." (Participant 01).

"It's gotten a lot harder as the years have gone...when you first come down it's so exciting and it's so new and different and as I said before, you don't fully understand how long you could be away for" (Participant 05).

"I've had to think more independently...make my own decisions. I mean I still ask my family and they're there ...there for me..." (Participant 03).

"Yeah, a lot more explaining, so - because I guess it's a younger group this year than it's ever been, so everyone needs to understand why we're doing this" (Participant 20).

Moderate response participants were less able to identify the reasons for the engagement other than it was part of their role with the organisation. They had difficulty in finding meaning in the efforts and attributed the dedication of resources as an external requirement, e.g.:

"It was such an up and down year in a lot of ways and it was really then that I was questioning 'oh what have I got myself into?'" (Participant 06).

'It didn't make sense to me in the first year, without guidance, that's what...I couldn't handle it and it was just a whole shock to everything..." (Participant 22).

"There comes a time when you think, you know, certainly in the first year I was just getting adjusted and all that sort of stuff and saying 'hopefully', you know 'I'll get another contract' and all that sort of stuff...some blokes get two years and that's it, they're gone" (Participant 13).

"Like I started and I played... and played well and then it just sort of fell away and they the coaches, they sort of... they forget about you" (Participant 12).

Weak response participants found it difficult to attach meaning to any aspect of the transition. They were quite lost and disabled by the process and it was a series of meaningless activities, e.g.:

"It took me a good month to come out of my shell a little bit and actually...well it took me a lot longer than a month to consider myself one of them" (Participant 07).

"It was a year's transition, and I see it with all the young boys that come through,...you know, they're really nice and you think 'oh they won't change', and then they get into the environment and they all do change and some do get to the end of the year and think 'I had a bit of fun but I can see myself changing' and take a step back, which I thought I did...took a bit of a step back and thought 'this isn't who I want to be" (Participant 07).

"...but then the third time you were called in by the coach and you know (being told)... 'grow up!' and copping all this sort of stuff..I remember getting on the 'phone and ringing mum and saying 'mum, I want to come home'... you know, this happened and I was pretty embarrassed I suppose" (Participant 11).

"...at that time I didn't realise, but he was basically mentoring me that first month, month and a bit" (Participant 11).

4.8.8 Concept 8 Engagement

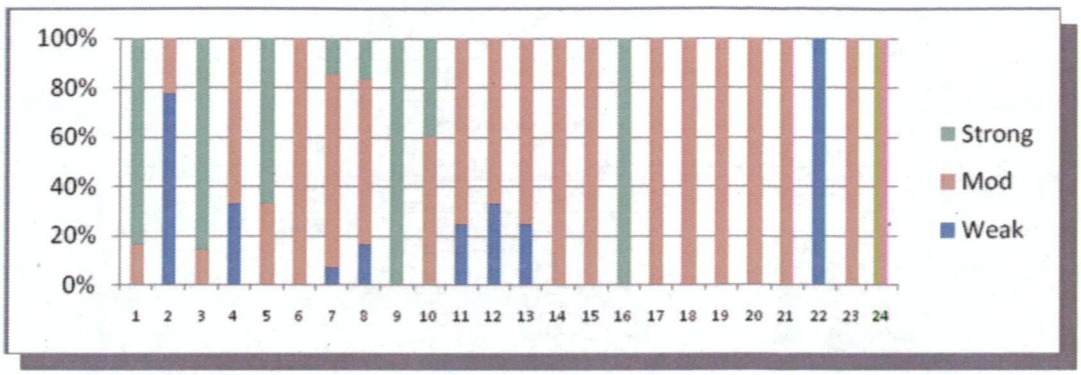

Figure 4.21 Engagement

Definition: Levels of concern from being disengaged (weak association) to being engaged in all aspects of the transition (strong association).

Guide: The coding is based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (lonely), moderate (some perceived support), or strong (engaged). Engagement explored the levels at which the participants were able to link with others in the new environment and the levels of perceived support they derived from the new support systems.

Strong response participants were able to make the transition to the new environment with an open and receptive 'mindset'. They were less likely to grieve their dislocation and more likely to embrace the new opportunities with enthusiasm, e.g.:

> "Yeah, it's like my life just started over and it's like I've moved to a new town and found new friends and everything was fine..." (Participant 01).
>
> "It was the best, it only took a week and I was comfortable..." (Participant 03).
>
> "I reckon it was sort of good in a way that you moved to here straight away so that you didn't have time...yeah obviously time to think about it and get nervous about it...you were here and you'd met everyone and

that...and then after I'd been here for a couple of days, then they said go home for a week...get all your... get all your loose ends sort of tied up... and your work and stuff like that... so I went back for a week and did that... and settled in after that" (Participant 09).

Moderate response participants were more likely to be overwhelmed by the transition and be wrestling with the competing emotions of leaving the past behind and engaging with the new environment. The enthusiasm for the move was tempered by their lack of real engagement, e.g.:

> "I mean I would go and be training flat out and then just go back to this house with the elderly couple and I'm just sort of sitting there watching footy on the telly and ...I'd just jump in the car and drive around to [ex-player's] place or something like that, but it's not the same as having your close mates that you grew up with" (Participant 10).

> "I don't... I don't usually have a problem making friends...ummm but with the footy club I suppose there's so many different age groups" (Participant 04).

> "I mean I can totally understand it, I mean people come and go and their focus is that whole circle, and when you're in there you're the best of mates, but when you're out of it it's almost like you're forgotten ...and it's, it's, it's so strange because you know, blokes you thought you were pretty good mates with them" (Participant 07).

Weak response participants really struggled to break with the old environment and engage with the new. They kept their old life "on hold" and made tentative and weak overtures to engage with others in the new environment, e.g.:

"I just wanted to go home all the time and I remember speaking to mum and dad ... three times a day and that went on for about three or four months" (Participant 11).

"The bloke [manager] they do get is very, very important because at that stage I was... that's the bloke that I could've turned to I think, when I was having all them problems" (Participant 11).

"I would take bits and pieces from anyone, but there was no-one I really, I really, you know, stuck to" (Participant 12).

"I think it can be overwhelming sometimes, people telling you different things and you don't know who to listen to or which parts of it to take for yourself" (Participant 22).

4.8.9 Concept 9 Support Systems

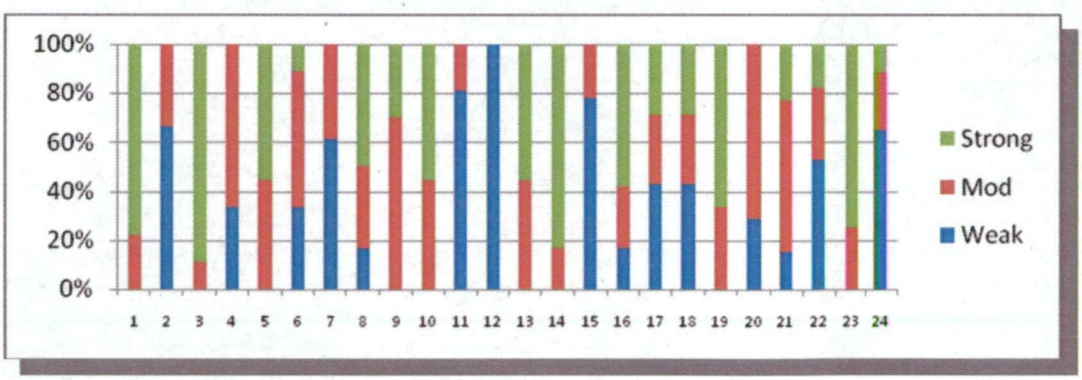

Figure 4.22 Support systems

Definition: Robustness of support systems.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (alone, searching...unavailable systems), moderate (competing interests), or strong (a solid available support system).

The support systems available to the participants were both tangible and intangible. There were systems that were part of the participants' immediate group of friends, family and supporters, and new systems in the form of structures and routines. The more intangible aspects regarded the participants' perceptions of these being available or of value to their particular circumstance.

Strong response participants were able to identify and use support systems from a variety of sources and select those of most value. Despite attributing much of their adaptation success to 'luck', their ability to use their supports in a timely fashion is evident, e.g.:

> "I've always had the family environment and these [home stay] people were just terrific...ummm I reckon if they weren't there, like if I just moved in with another bloke, I would've definitely got homesick and missed the family" (Participant 01).
>
> "I was lucky to have the family I had...they were great...and I reckon it would've been a lot harder if I'd been living somewhere by myself or with someone, cooking and cleaning and..... Some of the players haven't been so lucky and I know it's been harder for them" (Participant 03).
>
> "You really understand how important the family side of it is when you've been away... but having the understanding from the club point of view is really helpful" (Participant 05).
>
> "My cousin came down and stayed with me for a bit, and my brother moved in with me, so I had a lot of family around me...you are a 24-hour athlete, but at the same time I think you've got to be able to go outside and chill out" (Participant 19).

Moderate response participants were less able to access the support that surrounded them and were less likely to do so in a timely manner. Their transition was marked by a series of highs and lows, e.g.:

> "Just leaving all family and friends...I think that was...that was the biggest thing I struggled with" (Participant 08).

> "I reckon it was just hard to get your head around like actually being here and being amongst them and doing the same thing as them I reckon... takes you a while to sort of [say]...'hey ... I'm actually a part of...a part of this now' and yeah not just sit back... Just go about your business as usual...just the first few months you're adjusting like...this is... yeah that's probably the hardest" (Participant 09).

> "... but, you know, for a time to go up one on one to talk to someone, I still kind...you know, I don't know what it was, I don't know if it was, you know, too scared to talk to them or it was, you know, intimidating to go and grab (the captain) and say, 'Oh, mate, can I have a chat?' You just know like, all the guys would have probably... would have felt like that at some stage, I'm sure...like, it was just...got cold feet basically" (Participant 16).

> "No, don't have any friends - oh, not sort of friends that I probably wouldn't go out with them, so I know people but wouldn't call them friends...I mean, I thought I'd be worse than what I have, because I've never really been away from them, my family, like for a long time, but I think I handled it pretty well" (Participant 17).

> "I still kind of learning now because I haven't had, like, a family figure to like tell me all these things, so I have to learn by myself, yeah, so it's been tough" (Participant 18).

Weak response participants had difficulty identifying sources of support and had trouble investing trust in them, e.g.:

> "I had a friend come over... a couple of friends came over but probably I didn't talk to them as much as I should've" (Participant 02).
>
> "The first two weeks if I did have any spare time it was quite lonely in a foreign place...but they just sort of left us to our own devices, and you know, there probably wasn't much more they could do I guess, but you do tend to find yourself getting a bit lonely..." (Participant 09).
>
> "I didn't probably enjoy it too much to start with and wanted to be on the first plane home but the 'olds' wouldn't let me go home... nah, they just told me to stick it out" (Participant 11).

4.8.10 Concept 10 Role Development

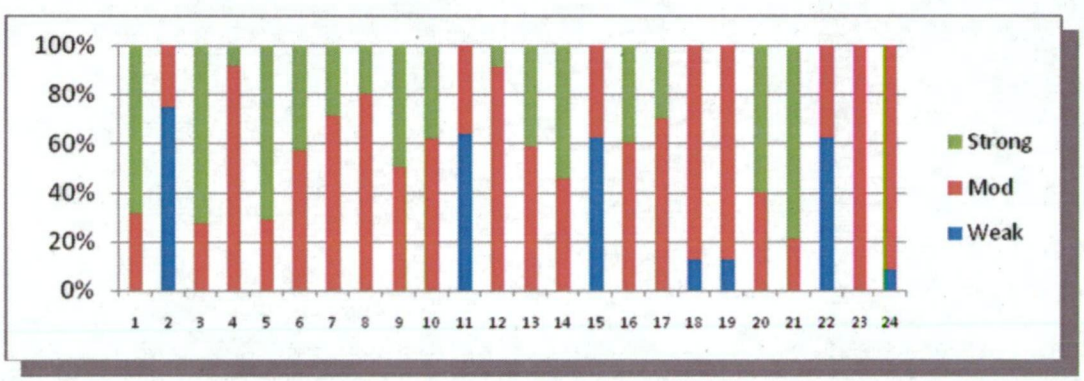

Figure 4.23 Role development

Definition: A developing understanding of the role-fit relationship.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (trying to please others and being altruistic), moderate (wrestling with competing interests), or strong (being competitive in the context of the evolving role-fit relationship). Role development explored the extent the participant's altruism and their competitiveness in the context of the evolving role-fit relationship.

Strong response participants were able to select strategies that were 'stage appropriate' and likely to advance their adjustment without compromise, e.g.

> "...well it's still a cut-throat business and ahhh, you do what you can to help the team but you also...the bottom line is team success...you've got to make sure that your success in ensured as well" (Participant 01).
>
> "I think with a bit of time and , you know, you start doing things well... you get a bit of feedback that you're doing okay ... it gives you a lot of confidence" (Participant 05).
>
> "I'd been up here for, like three months. I thought I was getting in the groove of it... you've got to organise yourself differently" (Participant 21).
>
> "...it didn't seem familiar because I hadn't done it before...obviously...but it was kind of...it was just about what I expected" (Participant 01).

Moderate response participants had less insight into their opportunity to select strategies and were more like to conform to group expectations irrespective of their suitability, e.g.:

> "As an 18-year-old, you're trying to fit in with the boys and you're trying to immerse yourself in the whole environment and it took me a year or so for me to find where I wanted to be in the whole environment" (Participant 07).
>
> "Ummm, I guess it gets confusing...not confusing but hard to stick by when you keep getting hurdles to jump or whatever...getting injuries or things like that...you think 'Oh what more can I do?' ...and 'this isn't working'...you sort of start thinking...so that's when it gets harder" (Participant 09).

"Yeah, how you...how you sort of know then as you go along the way...just that little things, just turning eighteen obviously sort of your life has just started... and there's a few things that you'll probably have to change about yourself" (Participant 13).

"I had to make a decision that I have to be more independent, being so far from my family and never see them... I have to make a conscious effort to forget about them...you know I was leaving home and going to a new environment, but about two months in I was like, gee yeah, miss them very much, yeah" (Participant 18).

"Yeah, it was pretty dramatic, it even went so quick, so much that you just kind of - everything fell into place and you get told to do it so you did it. I don't think there was - no arguments or anything like that, it was what I knew, I think" (Participant 19).

"...and you don't look back...that's what it's like, you can't look back, just take it" (Participant 20).

"It's tough... I've barely reached out, been part of normal life...you know that gets really hard" (Participant 24).

"I think it gave me an excuse to just go along with it, and not sort of... I don't know, not pushing... so I just floated through" (Participant 17).

Weak response participants were confused and tried to please others by conforming and applying themselves to strategies they have observed in others. They mimicked others, and resign themselves to the outcomes that flow from their efforts, rather than reflecting on the transition and what has or hasn't worked for them, e.g.:

"Yeah, we're encouraged sort of...there's not meant to be any barriers and stuff like that but it's still pretty hard to put your hand up and say something" (Participant 02).

"My self-belief was pretty low...so I remember that first five or six months of my time... my self-belief was very, very low" (Participant 11).

"All I wanted to do was give up and go home" (Participant 15).

So you sort of, if you want to be there, you've got to do what they do..." (Participant 22).

"... but basically when it all happened it was ... I'd been taken out of one life and thrown into a life that I didn't know existed and didn't... had no clear warning what it would be like, what to expect, what social life... you know... I had no idea, so it was a totally new life and it was just like thrown in there" (Participant 11).

"Ummm, maybe yeah...and then 'cos...that took a fair while, just adjusting and making the changes and learning what's required and now I'm just trying to put them in place" (Participant 02).

4.8.11 Concept 11 Manageability

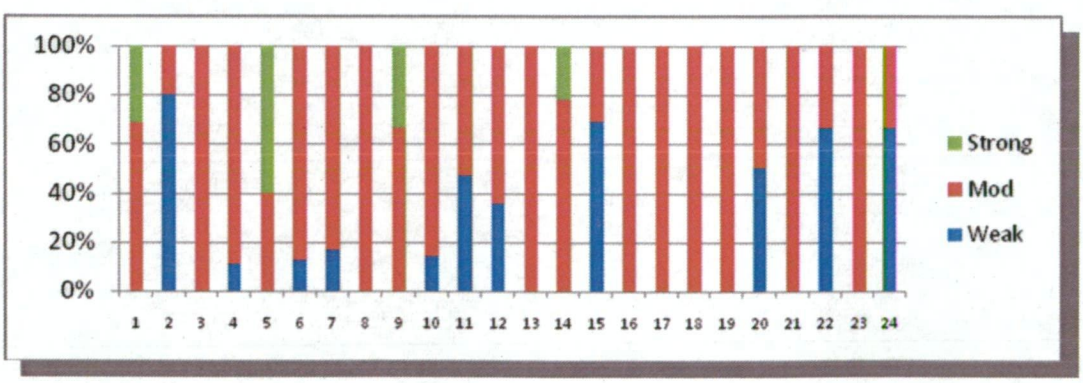

Figure 4.24 Manageability

Definition: Awareness of how to achieve what is required.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (not aware of how to achieve what is required), moderate (some awareness of how to achieve what is required), or strong (acutely aware of how to achieve what is required). Manageability described the availability of the participants' resources to meet the demands of the transition.

Strong response participants were able to identify resources and/or strategies to assist them in managing the component parts of the transition process, e.g.:

> "I'm used to the rigors of the AFL now and know exactly what's going on..." (Participant 01).
>
> "When you first come down it's so exciting and it's so new... and you don't fully understand how long you could be away... you really understand how important the family side of it is when you've been away... but having that understanding from the club point of view is really helpful" (Participant 05).
>
> "(I've) sort of got a reputation for being professional, I'm doing the right things here" (Participant 14).

Moderate response participants were more likely to see the transition as a 'whole' rather than the component parts and be less able to access the resources or strategies, e.g.:

> "...it's what you do all the time now... like I suppose I was kind of ready for it" (Participant 04).
>
> "I didn't have time to scratch myself and get homesick, ummm but I guess that might be the best way" (Participant 07).

"I think when I came here, there were no, no real expectations of me, but then (after time), there were and I think I struggled a bit with that" (Participant 08).

"...the two or three months what was missing for me was just having those close mates around me... it's a pretty intense environment and I don't think you quite get accepted..." (Participant 12).

Weak response participants struggled for manageable aspects of the transition and were often overwhelmed by the apparent magnitude of the experience, e.g.:

"I guess it gets confusing... not confusing but hard to stick by when you keep getting hurdles to jump or whatever... you think 'oh what more can I do?' (Participant 02).

"I guess I look at it all and do what seems right to me. Like a good thing and a bad thing that I listen to everyone's advice. I think you can get that much advice, you've just got to know what's right for yourself as well" (Participant 22).

"I've barely reached out, been a part of normal life. You know it gets really, really hard... you just don't really get the chance to get outside that [football] bubble" (Participant 24).

4.8.12 Concept 12 Personal Development

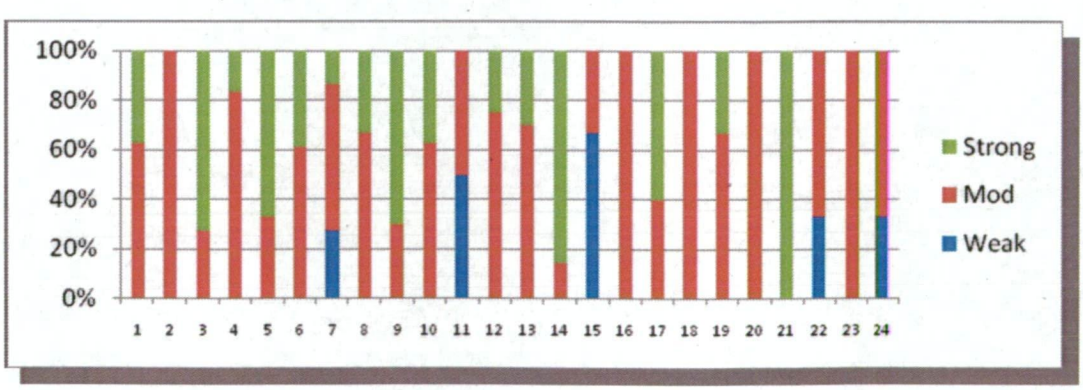

Figure 4.25 Personal development

Definition: From personal stagnation to personal growth.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (feeling personal stagnation), moderate (wrestling with competing interests), or strong (feeling continued development).

Strong response participants were able to identify development pathways and the learning experiences that characterise the process, e.g.:

> "I suppose I've learned to be comfortable the way I've approach things... I think I've made that adjustment" (Participant 03).
>
> "[There's] a lot of satisfaction as well for, you know, making that move... [others] told me I was crazy to leave and follow this dream... I felt a lot of satisfaction" (Participant 05).
>
> "...once you get up here you realise that everyone is on a pretty level playing field..." (Participant 21).

Moderate response participants were able to identify aspects of the development process, but not the sense of satisfaction as issues remained unresolved, e.g.:

> "I wanted to come down and have a crack... I didn't really have to adapt to the environment that much because I was always going back" (Participant 06).
>
> "Once you're in the bubble it's so 'not normal'... I mean I don't know what normal is, but it was not normal for me" (Participant 07).
>
> "I've come this far, it would be a shame to walk away... I knew the pathway was, you know, not always clear-cut" (Participant 14).

Weak response participants were more likely to feel a sense of personal stagnation as the directions and processes were less well understood, e.g.

> "When I missed out again and I just totally lost the plot and said '... I've had enough of it,' and said I was going to quit and didn't want to listen to anyone about what they had to say" (Participant 11).

> "If you're down, put the poker face on they...you know, no-one knows you're down, sometimes I'm down, but then I try and put the poker face on..." (Participant 15).

4.8.13 Concept 13 Relationship Building

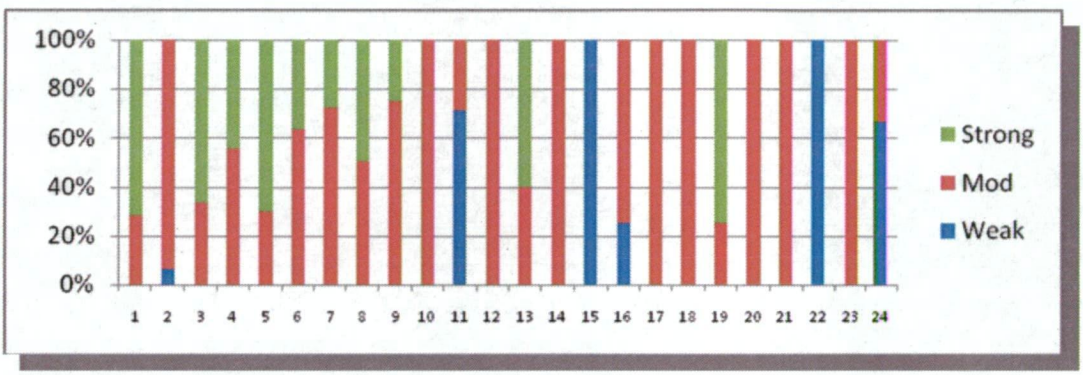

Figure 4.26 **Relationship building**

Definition: Has few close relationships, through to having rich and thriving relationships.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (feeling isolated), moderate (wrestling with competing interests), or strong (feeling supported and included). The participants were scored on the positive development of relationships with others, particularly when this was enabling rather than dependence.

Strong response participants had strong relationships with those around them and could understand the importance of maintaining these contacts, e.g.:

"... I suppose it was a strange thing to walk into another person's house and... we'll it was uncomfortable at the start but they were...well they still are, they're great people... as soon as I walked in there they were just great to me, they did everything for me and ummm, I can't thank them enough actually" (Participant 01).

"...it's probably the best thing about playing a team sport and ummm, you know achieving things together so... you get to know the guys a little bit better or...you know not everyone is the best of mates down here but we all, you know, we all get along really well and that respect's there" (Participant 05).

"Well it did make a difference because we came in and there was six blokes, like there was six blokes and we just... and we kind of got labelled ...oh the 'little big heads' when we came in like a few different things just because we were so tight...we didn't really, like we ... if...I don't know... like we conversed with ourselves and we kind of did everything together ...we had a lot of different programs that we had to do through the club and it was just all six of us doing them and ummm we kind of just hung around together the whole time" (Participant 01).

"Well, you just have to adapt to the new expectations as best you can and it was easier... with six of us (the other draftees)... because we could have a laugh together and not worry about... making a fool of yourself... or embarrassing yourself by asking a senior player a stupid question" (Participant 03).

Moderate response participants were able to identify the relationships that had been formed and appreciated the camaraderie that existed, but were less sure of the lessons learned from the experience that might allow them to thrive, e.g.:

"...the first time I got up here, I actually looked on all of the pin boards up around the place. There was a notice board...aligning senior players to the younger guys... the whole year went through and nothing got spoken about it. We were like, 'oh, well, you know, what's going on? You know, what's going on with the big brother system?' We just mentioned it one day and [they] said 'I don't think we're going to do it anymore'" (Participant 16).

"I soon worked out probably after two days of being here that I made six new friends in one day, so even though you're going to leave your best friends for however many years, you're going to make six best friends in one day, and they're going to be there for the rest of your football life, and even after footy" (Participant 20).

Weak response participants struggled with relationship and were upset by the transient nature of the friendships that were formed. They found it difficult to invest their trust and learn from the experience, e.g.

"I mean I can totally understand it, I mean people come and go and their focus is that whole circle, and when you're in there you're the best of mates, but when you're out of it it's almost like you're forgotten ...and it's, it's, it's so strange because you know, blokes you thought you were pretty good mates with them... you just..." (Participant 07).

"Oh obviously like it never gets any easier when you're missing your friends and your family from home and everything...even though I've been up here for a few years it doesn't really get much easier...sort of lived at home for bloody 13 or 14 years and built pretty strong relationships over that time...grew up with all me mates and that....and then ummm...the frustrating thing for me probably is ummm... I'm a bit

different to my mates from home in respect that... I ummm...although you...sort of all dropped out of school and they're all don't really look after themselves I suppose...they they ummm like they like to get in to the drink a fair bit and they're sort of all playing up and playing out a bit ... and I suppose that...that's what happens in the country a little bit because of your slow lifestyle...and there's not much else to do sometimes" (Participant 11).

"Then I realised I didn't have it and therefore... I felt like, well that made me feel... and I knew that I had let a lot of people down including myself, friends and family, I didn't even want to go out" (Participant 22).

4.8.14 Concept 14 Environmental Mastery

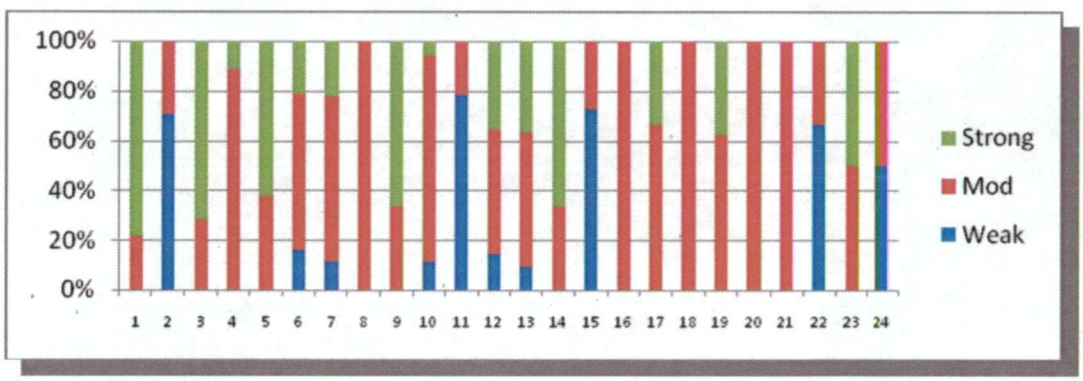

Figure 4.27 Environmental mastery

Definition: From lacking a sense of control to competence over environment.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (having difficulty managing the environment), moderate (wrestling with competing interests), or strong (mastery of environment). Participants were scored on their demonstration of mastery of the new environment, exampled by a sense of control and competence. Mastery of the new environment required a frame of reference that was reflective of the learning that had taken place and personal growth in terms of new skills and the confidence to apply them.

Strong response participants were able to show they understood the new environment and were able to access the necessary resources to establish a satisfactory level of mastery, e.g.:

> "Yeah, it's like my life had just started over and it's like I've moved to a new town and found new friends and everything's fine" (Participant 01).

> "... at the beginning when you didn't know if you were making mistakes (but) now...it's pretty clear what needs to be done and it's still hard... but there are clear things to do" (Participant 03).

> "...it takes you a while to sort of say '... hey I'm actually part of this now'... yeah, and not just sit back..." (Participant 09).

Moderate response participants had a blurred sense of the new environment and a distinct lack of self-confidence, e.g.:

> "[The coach] didn't really give you that much confidence, like, you didn't really talk to anyone... talk to me, so, I didn't really know where I was going" (Participant 18).

> "I think I knew what the changes, whether I did them changes... I knew what was required. I think I knew what was required... but I didn't really knuckle down" (Participant 19).

> "In your first year like, the baby of the group and you've got a bit of leeway, whereas in your second year you've been around for a while and you're expected to stand on your own two feet...a bit" (Participant 21).

Weak response participants struggled with the new environment and had few strategies to deal with the new challenges. They clung to old habits and lacked

the confidence to leave the old environment behind and embrace the new one, e.g.:

> "Sometimes I get conscious because, like I'm leaving behind the old me which I normally like, because the old me used to go out partying all the time and didn't have a care in the world, or what the consequences are later on, but now, now I just feel like a different man" (Participant 15).

> "When you first rock up, you think you'd know every player, like you'd think everyone would be as well known as that, and then you meet a few blokes that you've never really heard of and you think, '...that's what I'm going to be..." (Participant 02).

4.8.15 Concept 15 Trust and Commitment

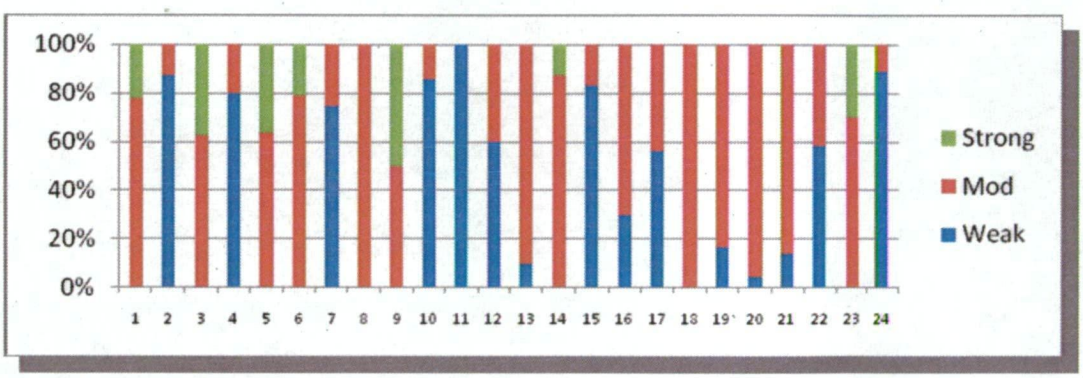

Figure 4.28 Trust and commitment

Definition: A sense of where the journey has taken them.

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (a general understanding of where the journey has taken them), moderate (a good idea of where the journey has taken them), or strong (a vivid idea of where the journey has taken them).

Participants were scored on their understanding of where the journey has taken them and their confidence in the future. It required an accurate reflection of the past and the learning acquired as part of that journey. Commitment to the future

was also a reflection of strength acquired as a result of a transition 'well resolved' and confidence that those challenges ahead were manageable and meaningful.

Strong response participants had a vivid impression of their journey since the dislocating moment and a clear agenda for the next stage, e.g.

> "I feel happy with myself because I'm playing, but not get big-headed about it... [I] went and set some goals out and the first time I pretty much set goals, and so I sat down, had a chat with [the assistant coach] and asked him about what it was like his second year in the AFL system, after having a good first year" (Participant 09).

> "There's something good about, you know, just being at one club your whole career and you know, playing ten years and getting a life membership with the club" (Participant 05).

> "I sort of cut the old and embraced the new. I... when I moved here you leave your friends and family, but you've got your friends that you know will still stay your friends and you've got your friends that you know will move on and you both go your separate ways with life" (Participant 23).

Moderate response participants were less assured and the dislocation was still a poignant reference point for them as they contemplated the next stage of the transition, e.g.:

> "Obviously the hardest thing is leaving... leaving your parents and leaving your friends, no doubt about that... just leaving your childhood and memories. You just leave everything just to start... start what could be a career" (Participant 13).

"Yeah, your life just... you don't know where you're going to go from year to year... I'd like to sort of know if I'm going to stay somewhere for a few years" (Participant 14).

"I actually had [started] thinking about going back home and stuff like that, so it was pretty confusing, sort of didn't know what was happening here whether they wanted me to stay here and stuff like that, so probably that sort of thing where I was a bit confused and, yeah, that's when I was away from my family and sort of being... that was the hardest thing I had to do" (Participant 17).

Weak response participants found it difficult to balance the experience of the transition with a future agenda, nor could they discriminate between strategies that had been useful and those that had not served them well, e.g.:

"Yeah, build me hopes up and then...so this year I didn't, sort of expect anything, I just sort of thought 'see what happens, if it happens, it happens, if it doesn't, it doesn't'... oh obviously like it never gets any easier when you're missing your friends and your family and everything... it doesn't get any easier" (Participant 04).

"... I guess it was just the mentality of not putting myself all the way out there, because I thought I wasn't as good as them" (Participant 07).

"I guess I'm still trying to handle it...I guess it's like a relationship, if you invest all your emotions into a girl and she goes and sort of cuts it off, you sort of think 'I don't like that feeling', so next time you go a bit more cautiously, so I reckon it's a lot like that and I mean I really...there was a stage there last year where I really thought I didn't want to play footy because I didn't want to be around the environment and I wanted to do

something else...you know still play sport but start fresh and try something else" (Participant 07).

"I had no clear warning what it would be like, what to expect, what social life...I had no idea, so it was a totally new life and it was just like [being] thrown in there" (Participant 11).

4.8.16 Concept 16 Discretion

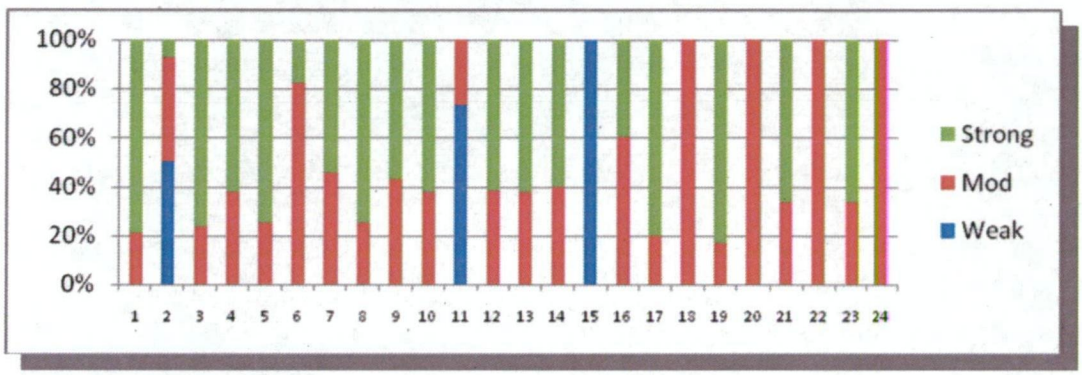

Figure 4.29 Discretion

Definition: How much autonomy is involved in controlling the process?

Guide: The coding was based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (being conformist), moderate (wrestling with competing interests), or strong (self-determined and independent). The participants were coded for their ability to be self determined and independent, rather than resigning themselves to the currents of the new environment.

Strong response participants were autonomous and appeared to have the freedom to make decisions and choices, e.g.:

"I think with a bit of time and you know, you start doing things well... you get a bit of feedback that you're doing okay, it gives you a lot of confidence..." (Participant 05).

" ... I've had to think more independently...make my own decisions. I mean I still ask my family and they're there ...there for me and, you know, there's always the telephone and it's easy to call and talk to ...whoever is there" (Participant 03).

Moderate response participants were more constrained and lacked the confidence to exercise their independence, e.g.

"I mean when you've got senior players sort of saying 'you should be doing this' and 'you should be doing this a lot more'... I mean if you knew that right from the start I mean it would it would make you get up to speed a lot better ...and I guess now I still don't know what was required because I never fully made it. I mean I would have liked a lot more of that, you know I would have liked a lot more of you know...making me...forcing me to do this and work a bit harder" (Participant 07).

"I think that you do, because you try and...you see what they eat, you want to eat like them. You see how they train, you want to sort of train like them because you don't want to be doing your own thing because then they will let you know" (Participant 13).

"Yeah, but I think it sort of gave me an excuse to just go along with it, and not sort of...I don't know, not pushing to get a game and stuff like that, so I just sort of floated through and that's why I sort of just got pushed to the side" (Participant 17).

Weak response participants were unable to make important decisions and were limited by the perceived constraints of the new environment. They were dependent on the structure around them and resigned to the pathways outlined for them, e.g.:

"I always had the feeling that home was always going to be there, you know, whether I made it or not, and I remember thinking early that I was going to be there for two years and getting half way through that first year and thinking 'oh well, I'm going to be going home anyway' and I can go back into what I was doing there" (Participant 11).

"... every now and then I have lapses in my head, you know, just saying stuff it, who cares, what are they going to do to you... but then later on after I feel bad... I think that sometimes, sometimes I actually say to them 'I want to go [home]'... " (Participant 15).

4.8.17 Summary

The weighting for the initial coding is illustrated in Table 4.3 below.

		Concepts															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Participants	1	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	M	M	S	S	S	M	S
	2	W	M	M	W	W	W	W	W	W	M	W	W	M	W	W	W
	3	S	S	S	S	M	S	S	S	S	S	M	S	S	S	M	S
	4	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	W	M	M	M	W	S	M	W	S
	5	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	M	S
	6	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	S	M	M	M
	7	W	M	M	W	M	M	W	M	M	M	M	W	M	M	W	S
	8	M	S	M	M	S	M	W	M	M	M	M	M	S	M	M	S
	9	M	S	S	M	M	M	M	S	S	S	M	M	M	S	S	S
	10	M	S	S	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	S	M	M	W	S
	11	W	M	W	W	W	M	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
	12	M	M	M	W	M	M	W	W	M	M	W	W	M	M	W	S
	13	M	S	S	M	M	M	M	W	S	M	M	S	S	M	M	S
	14	M	M	M	M	S	M	M	M	S	S	M	S	M	M	M	S
	15	W	M	M	W	W	W	W	M	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
	16	M	S	S	M	M	M	W	S	M	M	M	M	W	M	W	M
	17	M	M	M	M	W	M	M	M	M	S	M	M	M	M	W	S
	18	M	M	M	W	S	M	W	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
	19	M	S	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	S	S	M	M	S
	20	M	M	M	M	M	M	S	M	S	M	W	W	M	M	M	M
	21	M	S	S	M	S	M	M	M	S	S	M	M	M	M	M	S
	22	W	M	W	W	M	W	M	W	W	W	W	M	W	W	W	M
	23	W	M	S	W	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	S	M	S	M	S
	24	W	M	M	M	W	M	W	M	M	W	W	W	W	W	W	M

Weak	Moderate	Strong
W	M	S

Table 4.3 Patterns of response for individual participants across the 16 concepts

The 16 concepts provided a description of the characteristics of the experience of the geographically dislocating transition. The three broad coding categories (i.e. *strong, moderate* and *weak*) in the concept areas, enabled the identification of patterns for individual participants and gave a general indication of the distinguishing characteristics.

While the data contained many examples of the participants' experience in negotiating the geographically dislocating challenge and their general strategies, the group patterns for individuals experiencing the geographically dislocating transition were yet to be determined.

4.9 Patterns of category responses

While the general patterns could be observed in the initial coding process, the responses had not been tested for the density of response, nor were they reflective of a guiding framework from the literature in regard to thriving in periods of geographic dislocation. This was achieved by a secondary examination of the data and provided an opportunity to examine the stages of the transition, and a deeper analysis of the processes involved.

As described earlier, using a more sensitive calibrated instrument (see exemplars in Appendices O (i–iv), 'Concept Summaries'), the coding strengths (i.e. *strong, moderate* and *weak*) were converted to a numerical representation (in 0.25 increments) and a more specific indication of the participants' category.

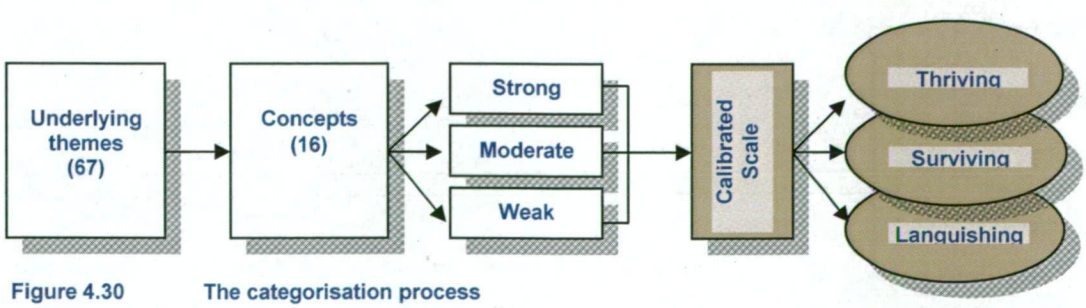

Figure 4.30 The categorisation process

The application of the calibrated scale provided a numerical score for each of the participants on each of the concepts. The boundaries for the divisions between the categories were determined by reference to the strength of the response and the guiding framework. The consistent definitional attributes and the increment totals scored by the participants through the application of the scale allowed them to be described as:

(a) *thriving,* where it recognised the adaptive processes of recovery and growth, including the mastery of strategies to account for the disparity between expectations and experience (Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001). It was now more accurate to say that thriving was a response to challenge (because thriving represents gain), rather than a response to threat (minimisation of loss) (Carver, 1998) and that it involved "...the effective mobilization of individual and social resources... leading to positive mental or physical outcomes and/or positive social outcomes" (Ickovics & Park, 1998, p. 237). On these data, the thriving participants were identifiable.

(b) *Languishing* where it indicated the lack of mastery, a lack of understanding of process, and a failure to learn from the experience. On these data, the languishing participants were identifiable.

(c) *Surviving,* where it placed the participant between these two polarised positions and where movement was possible in both directions, dependent upon the resolution of the tasks of the transition. On these data, the surviving participants were identifiable.

This consistent approach was applied to all of the concepts and these patterns are illustrated below.

4.9.1 Readiness for the challenge

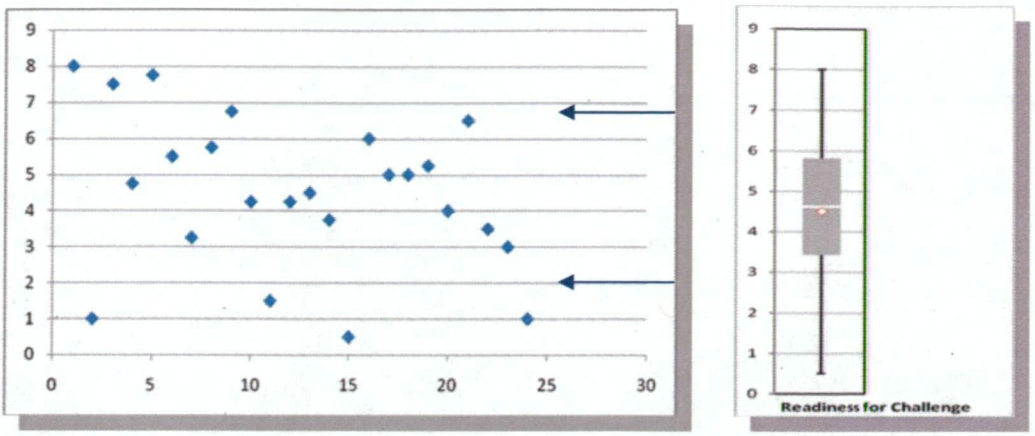

Figure 4.31 **Categories for readiness for the challenge**

Thriving participants were consistently able to demonstrate enthusiasm and insight in regard to the challenge of the dislocating transition, e.g.:

> "Ahhhh, I'm not sure ... there was no real need to 'cos I wasn't...I really wasn't labouring, I just was ...the way I was, I had a solid family life at home ...where I was staying...training was training, like you just have ...like that wasn't a problem" (Participant 01).

Surviving participants were equally enthusiastic, but had limited levels of insight to fully understand the challenging transition, e.g.:

> "We went down and he said 'how's it going?' and I said 'pretty good but I can't afford to eat at the moment... I've got no money to do anything'. And he said 'what do you mean?'... he said 'haven't you been paid?' and I said 'nup, I don't know what's going on, I don't even think my contract's started... I don't even know what my contract is', or anything like that" (Participant 10).

Languishing participants were excited and enthusiastic, but lacked any insight into the character or process of the transition, e.g.:

"I remember thinking I wasn't good enough to actually get drafted and I was thinking once I got to the club, you know, they'd find me out" (Participant 11).

4.9.2 Motivation

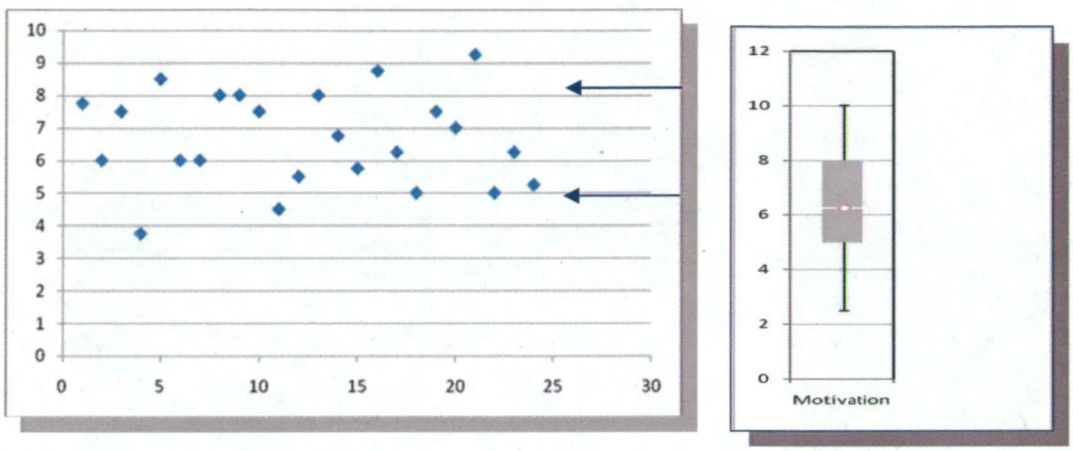

Figure 4.32 Categories for motivation

Thriving participants were energetic, motivated and able to describe the pathways of the transition, e.g.

"Sort of, but once you get up here you realise that everyone is on a pretty level playing field. It's like going from primary school to high school, sort of, you've gone from being top underage player and then you're up here and you're back to the bottom of the list. You've got to prove yourself to the team" (Participant 21).

Surviving participants were wrestling with the competing demands of the transition, e.g.

"So it was...it was one of those years that was, yeah, a bit tough and really thoughts of going back and all that sort of thing" (Participant 14).

Languishing participants were withdrawn and compliant, e.g.:

"Yeah, build me hopes up and then...so this year...well last year coming into it I sort of ...I didn't...I didn't...sort of expect anything... I suppose... I

just sort of...just thought ...see what happens on the day...and I won't...if it happens it happens, if it doesn't it doesn't" (Participant 04).

4.9.3 Positive planning

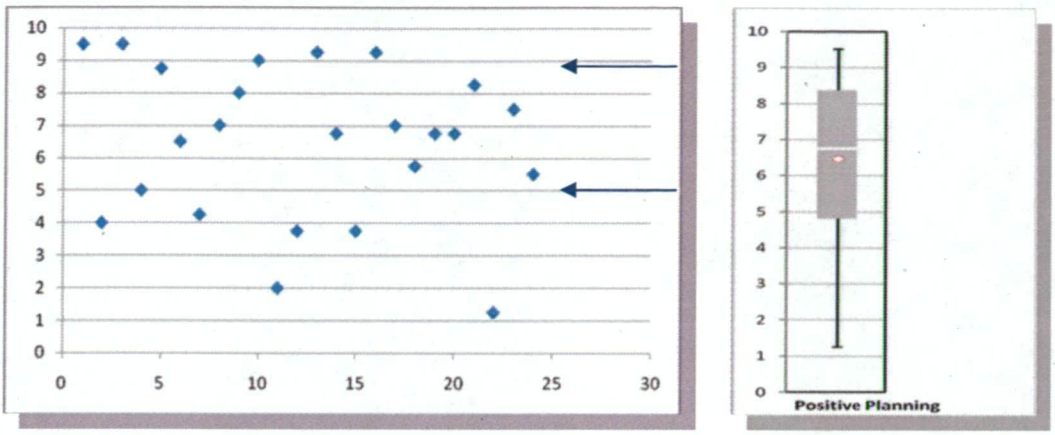

Figure 4.33 Categories for positive planning

Thriving participants had consistently positive expectations of the transition experience, e.g.:

> "Yeah, it was the best feeling to obviously have made it and then got recognised for it ...we think that you're one of the most exciting Tassie boys here drafted this year" (Participant 16).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing demands in regard to their planning program, e.g.:

> "Yeah, it was just hard, a lot of stress but at the same time like I had exams and stuff like that so I couldn't really focus on it and to tell you the truth it's probably a little bit of a blur" (Participant 06).

Languishing participants continued to have laboured concerns, e.g.

> "I think everyone knew that I was going the wrong way, that I'd done wrong and I sort of let a lot of people down, including myself, but at the time I didn't realise that I was doing it" (Participant 22).

4.9.4 Comprehensibility

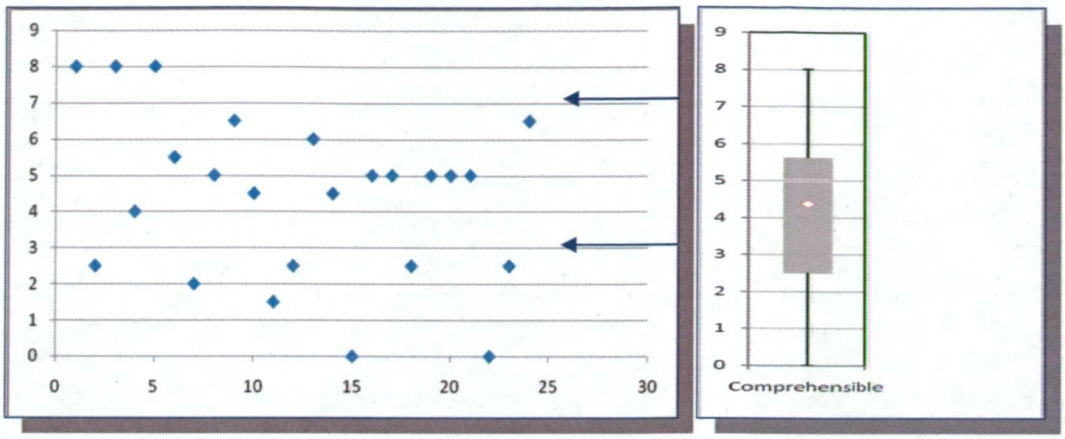

Figure 4.34 Categories for comprehensibility

Thriving participants were acutely aware of what was required of them in the transition, e.g.:

> "Yeah, it was sort of pretty familiar...most guys who were in that system, in that...who played for TAC cup teams or who were playing those State championships that year, ummm have got a pretty good idea of sort of what the deal is..." (Participant 05).

Surviving participants had some awareness of the challenges, e.g.:

> "Ummm, ahh first year I was probably more confident than...than I was second year...only because I didn't have the setback at that stage...but then after the setback and missing out the first year I sort of thought "look don't ...get your hopes up" (Participant 04).

Languishing participants had little awareness of what was required of them, e.g.:

> "When I found out I was drafted with him I went back to sleep and I woke up and I rang home 'cos I was up in the city playing footy and said 'I don't know if I want to play AFL footy or not' and he said 'are you serious?' and I go 'yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah' " (Participant 15).

4.9.5 Gaining confidence

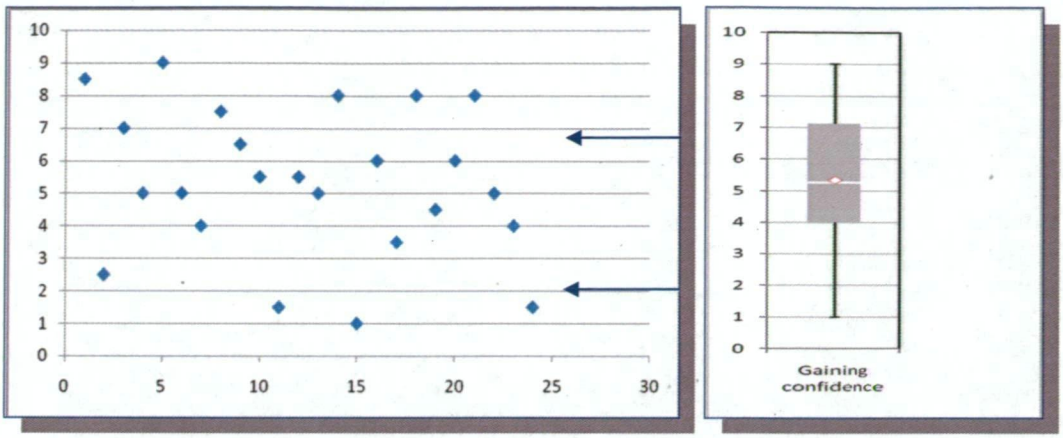

Figure 4.35 **Categories for gaining confidence**

Thriving participants were confident about the 'next step' and were clear about directions, e.g.:

> "Yeah, exactly and ummm I think I always had an underlying confidence that I could, you know that I could do quite well, ummm, but I think that came with a bit of time, like I don't think straight away" (Participant 05).

Surviving participants had some awareness and could make general plans, e.g.

> "I guess it says that I'm a lot more motivated and focussed ... on achieving a goal...ummm, probably a little bit more mature at times" (Participant 07).

Languishing participants lacked clarity and confidence about the directions forward, e.g.

> "Oh, it was just 'what I was doing'... basically I was there and I knew I was going to be there for two years 'cos I signed a two year contract, and that's basically the way I thought...I thought 'well I'm here for the next two years', so ..." (Participant 11).

4.9.6 Sense making

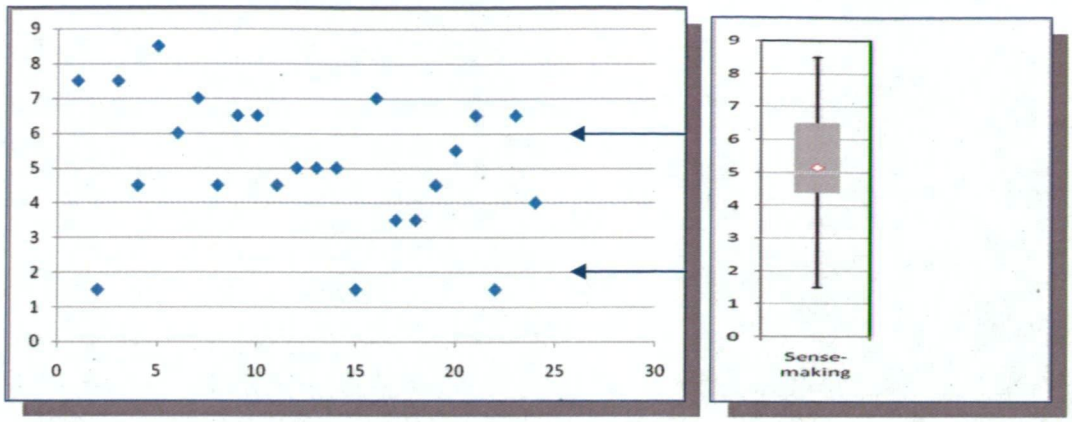

Figure 4.36 Categories for sense making

Thriving participants were keenly experiencing the journey and could understand the associated requirements, e.g.:

> "Well, yeah, comparing notes and just seeing what was happening and ahhhh, it was just...it was an easy transition to come down and be with some of my friends ummm, I had no problems" (Participant 01).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing concerns, e.g.:

> "The first year for me it was a bit... it was all over the shop... the coach got sacked... we'd be out every weekend after the game and so that's what I thought maybe what you done..." (Participant 23).

Languishing participants were often disillusioned and could not make sense of their journey, e.g.:

> "Yeah... I think when I first came over... I think a few of the boys thought... 'cos I didn't expect, I didn't know what to expect... I guess I wasn't working hard enough, but I thought I was working hard enough...I guess" (Participant 02).

4.9.7 Meaningfulness

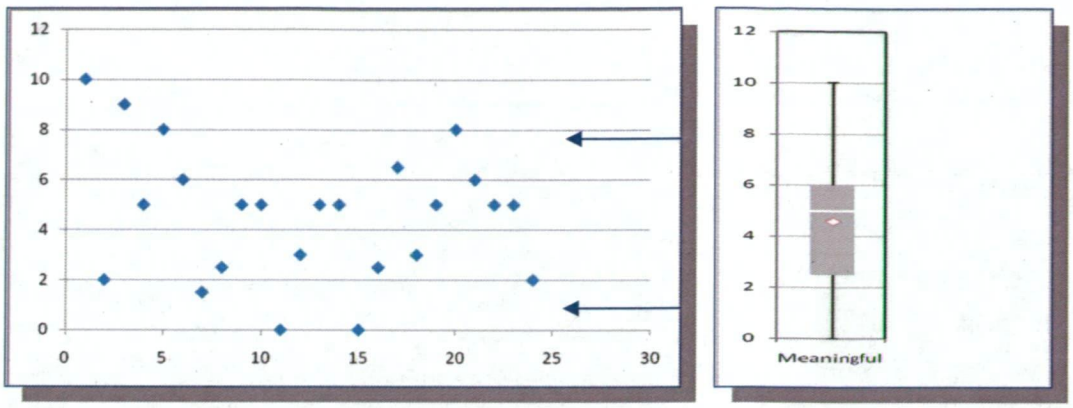

Figure 4.37 Categories for meaningfulness

Thriving participants had a clear understanding of why they were engaged in the activities surrounding the challenging transition, e.g.:

> "Oh definitely... Well, you are given a chance. When you first move here in the first year, and I guess if you don't make it within the two years...like, some people get an extra year, an extra two years, but you've got your chance. You've got to take it" (Participant 20).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing demands of the transition and were confused about the transition process, e.g.:

> "I was one of those people who didn't know...I didn't know how I was going to go about it. I was just...I was just stoked, but I think you sort of - you have to change. You have to change your ways, adapt to what you've got yourself into" (Participant 13).

Languishing participants lacked insight into the meaning behind the process, e.g.:

> "Yeah, my self-belief was pretty low so I remember that the first five or six months of my time...my self- belief was very, very low" (Participant 11).

4.9.8 Engagement

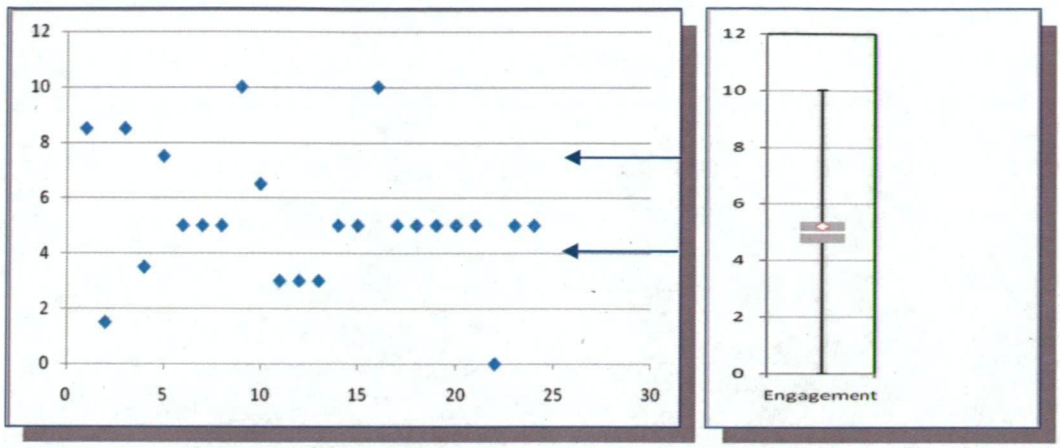

Figure 4.38 Categories for engagement

Thriving participants were actively engaged with a broad range of support systems, e.g.:

> "I reckon it was sort of good in a way that you moved to here straight away so that you didn't have time...yeah obviously time to think about it and get nervous about it...you were here and you'd met everyone" (Participant 09).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing demands of the transition and found engagement problematic at times, e.g.:

> "Yes and no. I mean, it's a bit like you get along with everyone pretty well, I don't necessarily think I get along with anyone worse than anyone so, no, I don't think so" (Participant 17).

Languishing participants were lonely and disengaged, e.g.:

> "It does make a difference, I think that feeling of having someone that you can turn to and not necessarily in football either, but just family that are going to be there for you" (Participant 15).

4.9.9 Role development

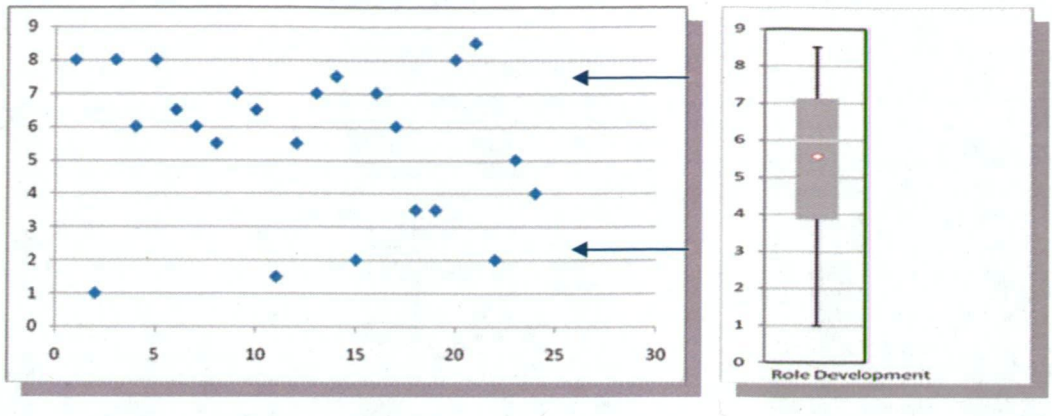

Figure 4.39 **Categories for role development**

Thriving participants were competitive, while at the same time developing their position within the transition, e.g.:

> "...blokes help other fellas as much as they can, but ahhh, there's a certain point where you've got to say 'a couple of my tricks are my tricks...and you can't have them' [laughter]... like 'do it your own way' " (Participant 01).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing demands of the transition and their role within it, e.g.:

> "You absorb, but it definitely takes time - playing and learning the structures and that... I've never really played like that, so it was really a learning curve" (Participant 24).

Languishing participants tried to accommodate all the demands on their time and concentration, but found the task bewildering, e.g.:

> "Sometimes I get conscious because, like I'm leaving behind the old me which I normally like...didn't have a care in the world or what the consequences are later on, but now...now I just...I just feel like a different man" (Participant 15).

4.9.10 Personal development

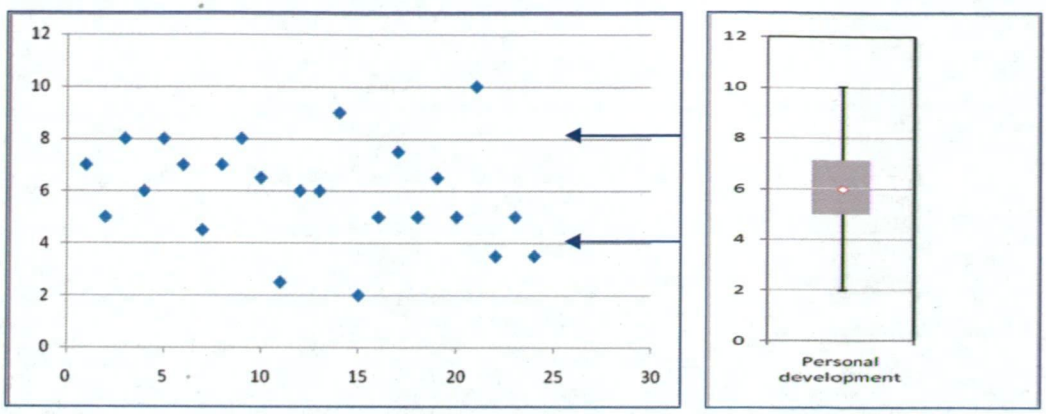

Figure 4.40 Categories for personal development

Thriving participants felt that they were is a process of continued development and understood the associated learning and growth, e.g.:

> "I think you do a bit. It's all part of - you know, you want to be structured and you want to be told what to do a lot, but personally I always prefer just to go out, make my own mistakes" (Participant 14).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing demands on their time and had mixed feelings about their continued development, e.g.:

> "Oh and one more thing, once you're in the football environment, it's all footy and you seem to live a football life and you told how much time you're going to get off and you get told what weekends...you play on the Saturday and get the Sunday off and it's all involved around training...so from the age of 18 I've been doing that and never really had to make a decision myself ...and my mates all went overseas and stuff like that, I mean they all... I mean there are certain things you miss out on and it's a sacrifice and you know" (Participant 10).

Languishing participants felt high levels of personal stagnation, e.g.:

"Mmm for me the hardest thing was probably having that ummm self-belief in that what I was there for ...and what I was playing AFL football for, and that come into form...being in and out of the seniors all the time, injury, you're playing senior footy and get injured and miss six weeks and have to come back through the 'twos' and I had a couple of coaches that weren't ...you know I was the kind of player that needed feedback, I needed to know how I was going, I needed to know how I was travelling and I never got that from the coach, I always felt very insecure in what I was doing" (Participant 11).

4.9.11 Manageability

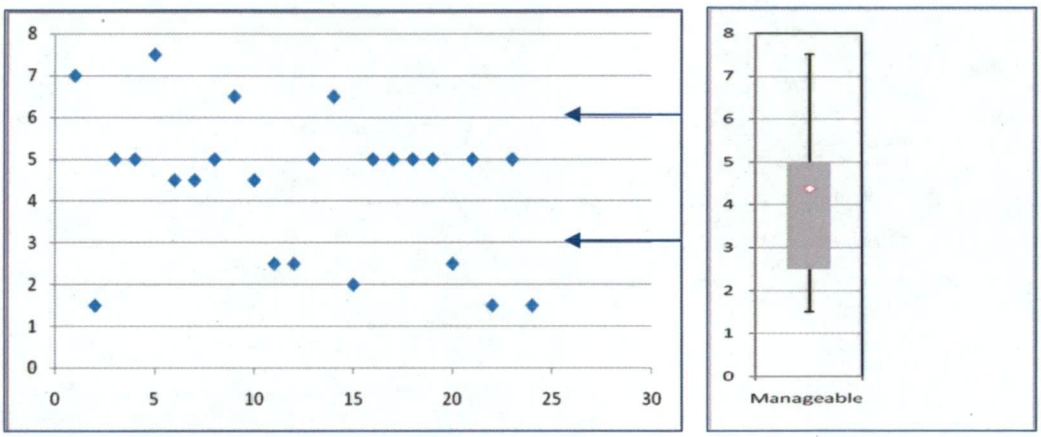

Figure 4.41 **Categories for manageability**

Thriving participants knew how to manage their transition and mustered resources to do so, e.g.

"I mean ... but I think with a bit of time and you know, you start doing things well... you get a bit of feedback that you're doing okay it gives you a lot of confidence and..." (Participant 05).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing demands and did not always have a clear idea of how to manage the demands, e.g.:

"The whole lifestyle is so different to anything... There's a big jump in the training and it's a lot harder...I mean you're not expected to train like the older players, but they're setting... the standards" (Participant 03).

Languishing participants were unsure how they would cope with the demands of the dislocating transition, e.g.:

"Ummm, maybe yeah...and then 'cos...that took a fair while, just adjusting and making the changes and learning what's required and now I'm just trying to put them in place..." (Participant 02).

4.9.12 Support systems

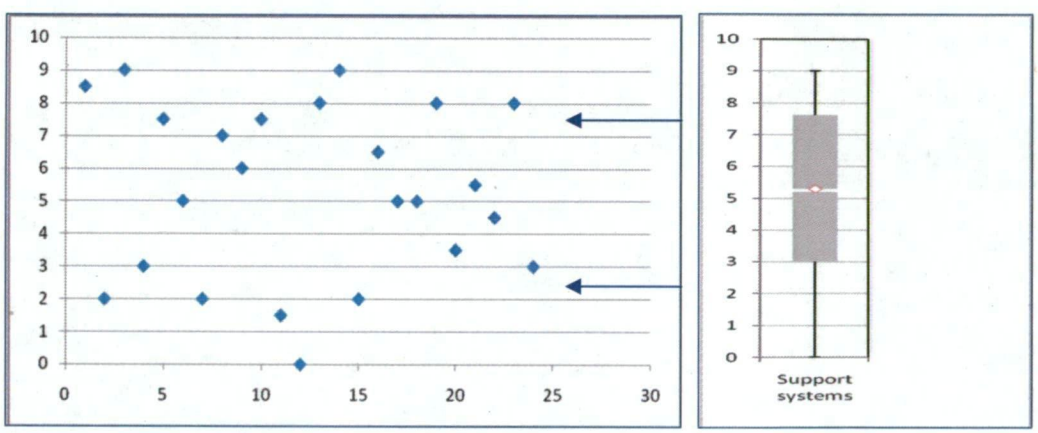

Figure 4.42 **Categories for support systems**

Thriving participants had solid and available support systems, e.g.:

"Where I just...because I'm very independent I'll just do...I'll do what I want to do more, although there's boundaries in there, obviously, with the coaching staff and what the coaches want you to do, but I think when [player named] was here...my cousin and that were friends with him - so kind of like got to chill out with him a little bit before I got here, not knowing I was coming to [destination named], but then kind of chilled out with him for a bit" (Participant 19).

Surviving participants searched for meaning in the relationships around them, e.g.:

> "Ohh, you're obviously a bit unsure, like you're ...sort of wait for someone else and to follow their lead sort of thing...you sort of ... just watch other people..." (Participant 04).

Languishing participants were unsure of who their support systems were, or how to access them, e.g.:

> "...and just friends and that...I guess last year I was a little...I had a friend come over ...a couple of friends came over but probably didn't talk to them as much as I should've" (Participant 02).

4.9.13 Relationship building

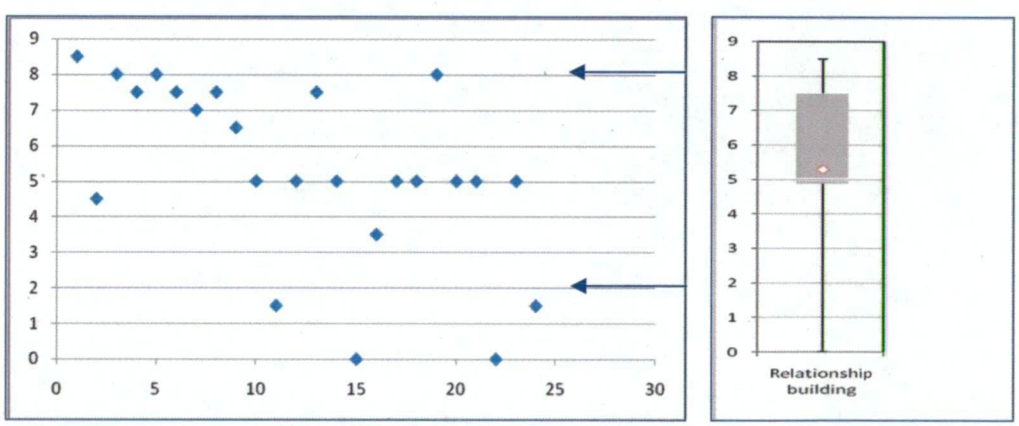

Figure 4.43 **Categories for relationship building**

Thriving participants felt supported and included throughout the transition period, e.g.:

> "Yeah that's right, if you give them your love, they'll give you theirs, so like...which was great and I suppose being so far away from mum and dad in the first year was pretty tough and I didn't have a car so I was on the train for 3½ hours of a weekend, trying to get home and see mum ... I think mum was more upset than me when I moved away.. I didn't get

homesick once... I used to miss me brother a bit, but that was about it" (Participant 01).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing interests in their adjustment and occasionally felt isolated, e.g.:

> "Not really, I'm not that sort of person... I just... I would take bits and pieces from anyone, but there was no-one I really, I really, you know, just stuck to... like I'll sort of spread around a bit.... But there's no-one that I really cling to or anything" (Participant 12).

Languishing participants often felt isolated and were unsure how to access support, e.g.:

> "I think originally, like the first two...I reckon a month and a half maybe two months...I reckon it's just fitting...like finding some friends...'cos when you first get here, you're friendly with everyone, but you're not really friends with anyone" (Participant 02).

4.9.14 Environmental mastery

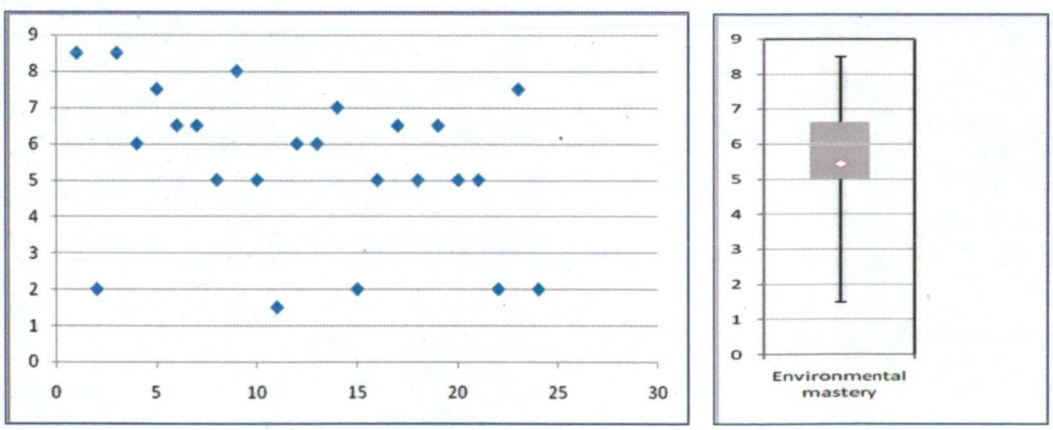

Figure 4.44 Categories for environmental mastery

Thriving participants had a good sense of the new environment and were able to make sense of the changing dimensions, e.g.:

"So I'd say you have to be prepared for things to be different. I was lucky to have the family I had...they were great...and I reckon it would've been a lot harder if I'd been living somewhere by myself or with someone, cooking and cleaning and..... Some of the players haven't been so lucky and I know it's been harder for them... well, you just have to adapt to the new expectations as best you can" (Participant 03).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing demands of the new environment, e.g.:

"Even though you're the number one draft pick doesn't mean you're going to be guaranteed a game next year...which is what I've found probably in my second year, like you don't...in your first year like, the baby of the group and you've got a bit of leeway, whereas in your second year you've been around a while and you're expected to stand on your own two feet a bit" (Participant 21).

Languishing participants struggled in the new environment and experienced difficulty in making the required adjustments, e.g.:

"Oh, probably more on the social side of it...I remember getting out for the first time with these group of blokes, drinking and stuff like that and being very shy and you sort of stand back and watch what these blokes do and then actually drinking with them and them actually getting you involved in what they were doing, 'cos blokes were drinking and stuff like that..." (Participant 11).

4.9.15 Trust and commitment

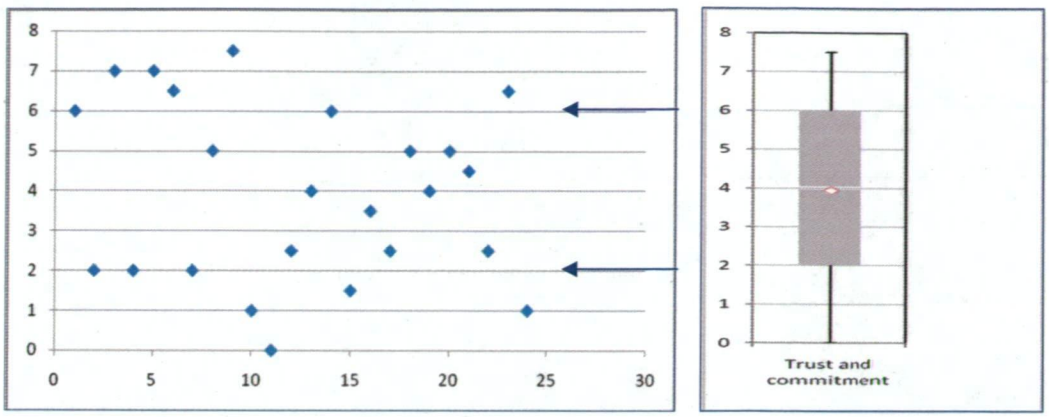

Figure 4.45 **Categories for trust and commitment**

Thriving participants had a vivid idea of where the journey was taking them and were prepared to commit to the future, e.g.:

> "I reckon it was just hard to get your head around like actually being here and being amongst them and doing the same thing as them I reckon...takes you a while to sort of... 'hey ... I'm actually a part of...a part of this now'...and yeah not just sit back" (Participant 09).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing demands of the transition and were sometimes unwilling to look too far ahead, e.g.:

> "I just think that when you sort of come to a club there are times there when you think you're on a roller coaster ride, and you don't know when it's going to come or for how long or what" (Participant 13).

Languishing participants struggled for direction and were unwilling to commit, e.g.

> "I mean, I find it harder now to give in to everything, I'll sort of crack the shits, keep to myself, ...because of where I'm at, like, I think, you know, someone took away my career at this stage and I've got [nothing], you know, I'm investing all this time, all this effort" (Participant 24).

4.9.16 Discretion

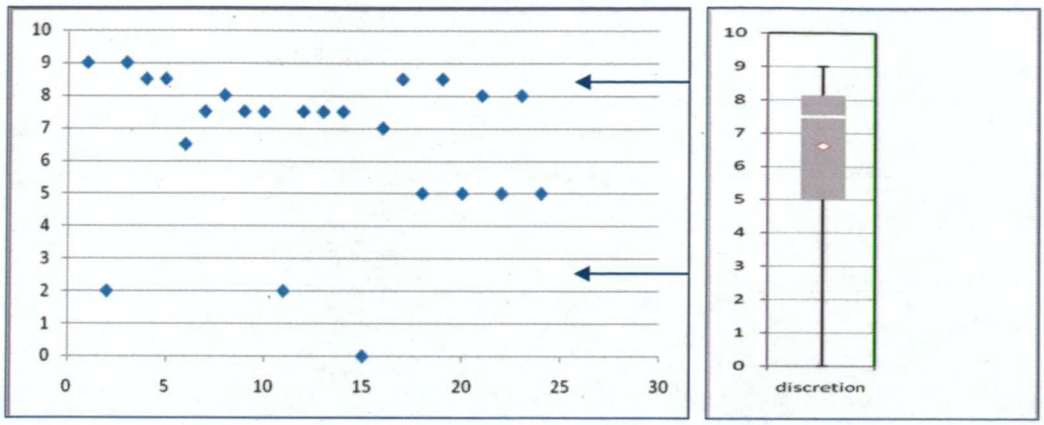

Figure 4.46 **Categories for discretion**

Thriving participants were self-determined and independent, and able to see opportunities for the exercise of discretion, e.g.:

> "...generally it's just ahhh, you go about it your own way and see how you go...because there's not many spots there and there's... even though everyone says 'everyone's helping everyone' " (Participant 01).

Surviving participants wrestled with the competing demands on their ability to be self-determined and were reluctant to push the boundaries too hard, e.g.:

> "Yeah I know, it's such a strange feeling because for so long... since I was 17, footy has been everything...you put everything into it and you know, the other parts of your life have suffered...ummm but you don't know ...I mean I'm struggling a bit now with who I am and where I fit in... and now I'm back in [city named], I've never been in [city named] of my own accord before, it's always been with footy and I'm trying to get to 'why I'm here' sort of thing...it's a very strange feeling you know. If you're going to make it you have to put everything into it, but it doesn't allow much time for all else" (Participant 07).

Languishing participants conformed to expectations and were reluctant to exercise their discretion for fear of making a mistake, e.g.:

"Oh, terrified me... I remember walking out of the meeting and he just called a 'spade a spade' and said 'you've got to grow up' and basically all that sort of stuff and 'pull your finger out or you'll be out of here before you know it' and...[trails off]...I remember probably getting on the 'phone and ringing mum and saying 'mum and dad, I want to come home'... you know, this happened and I was pretty embarrassed I suppose. But yeah, that was probably about six or seven weeks into what I was doing... ummm yeah, so that was interesting" (Participant 11).

4.9.17 Congruency of patterns

These patterns were broadly congruent with the participant data (see Table 2.2, p. 23) drawn from the AFL statistics, and further indication that the outcomes for the participants negotiating the geographically dislocating transition were factors of the identified characteristics and processes. These categories are illustrated in Table 4.4 below.

	Languishing Participants	Surviving Participants	Thriving Participants
Participant Data	2, 11, 15, 22	4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24	1, 3, 5, 9, 13, 14, 21
A.F.L. Data (see Table 2.2, p.23)	2, 7, 10, 11	4, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24	1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 14, 19, 20, 23

Table 4.4 Participant categories

4.10 Temporal considerations

The temporal aspects of this transition were examined in three parts, reflecting the movement from preparation to encounter, from encounter to adjustment, and from adjustment to stability (Nicholson, 1987). The participants were asked to reflect on their transitional journey and to identify their current position on a scale, and then the time involved in reaching that point (See Appendix I). The participants had no difficulty in identifying their position and the timeframe involved and the information is represented in three parts below.

4.10.1 Stage 1

The participants' journey to Stage 1 was described as 'I am exploring what is involved in the transition' and, in the context of the following stages, reflected a preparatory stage leading to the required adjustments (see Figure 4.47 below).

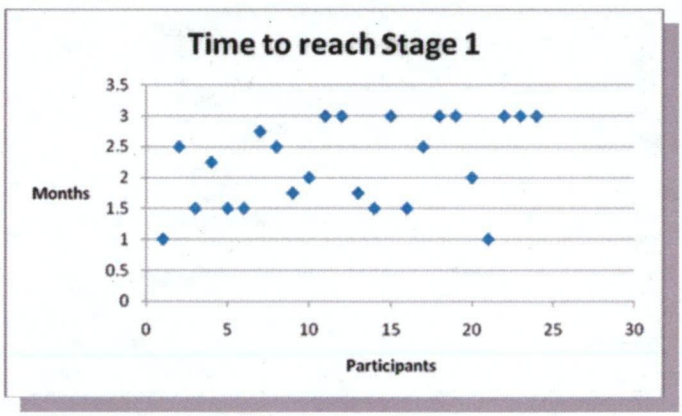

Figure 4.47 Time to reach stage 1

The clusters of participants resembled the categories already identified, i.e. those identified as thriving (i.e. participants 1, 3, 5 and 9, together with boundary participants 13, 14 and 21), had 'resolved' the particular demands of the stage in a timely fashion (i.e. between 1 and 2 months) and were moving confidently to the next phase/stage of the transition. Similarly, those surviving (participants 4, 6, 8, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 23) and languishing (i.e. participants 2, 11, 15 and 22, together with boundary participants 7, 12 and 24) took longer to resolve

the transition (i.e. typically between 2 and 3 months) and were less certain about the transition to the next phase/stage.

4.10.2 Stage 2

The clusters of participants were more pronounced in the second stage of the transition where the encounters were demanding and their resolution dependent on satisfactory progress to that point. The journey was described as 'I am adjusting to the changes and learning what is required' and, in the context of the following stage, reflected learning and self-regulation stage leading to some stability (see Figure 4.48 below).

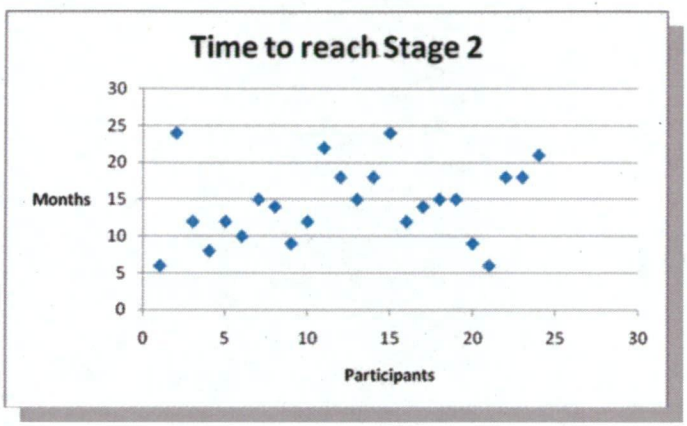

Figure 4.48 Time to reach stage 2

The clusters become more apparent with the thrivers resolving the demands of the transition in a relatively short period (i.e. between 5 and 12 months), whereas those identified as surviving had a spread of time ranging between 9 and 20 months; and those languishing emerged as struggling with the timeframe and were taking between 18 to 24 months to accomplished the requisite tasks.

4.10.3 Stage 3

The clusters of participants were dramatic in the third stage of the transition where their understanding was dependent on satisfactory progress to that point. The journey was described as 'I understand what is required and I am actively

engaged' and, in the context of the previous stages, reflected the application of the learning leading to some stability (see Figure 4.49 below).

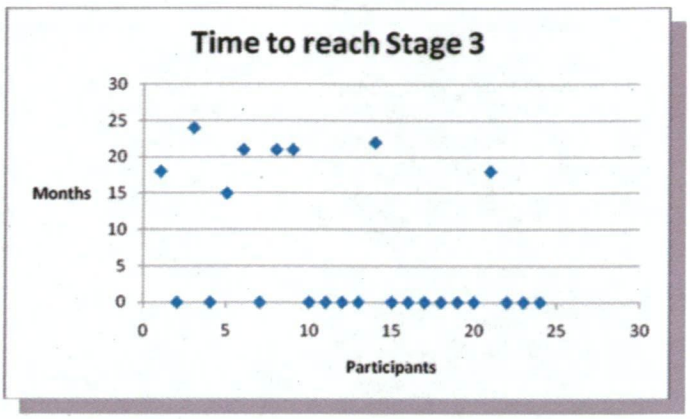

Figure 4.49 Time to reach stage 3

The participant clusters consolidated where most thrivers emerged from the rest and could identify the step to understanding and could place a timeframe around it. The remainder identified this 'understanding' as something to which they aspired, and placed themselves at a point on the continuum at an earlier point (this is represented as a 0 score on Figure 4.49).

In summary, the timeframe involved in the journey from 'preparation to active engagement' varied across participants. Thriving participants completed the tasks at each of the three stages relatively quickly, and their trajectory through the stages was positive and reflective of growth and learning. Surviving participants managed to progress through the first two stages, but comparatively more slowly (i.e. between 9 – 20 months, compared with thriving participants taking 5 – 12 months). The trajectory for surviving participants was more problematic at Stage 3, where only two survivors (i.e. participants 6 and 8) have reckoned to have completed the cycle. Languishing participants took longer to complete the first two stages (i.e. up to 2 years) and their journey had become perilously slow; none managed to reach stage three of the cycle.

4.11 Summary of results

This chapter described the results from the mixed methods approach to answer the research question, i.e. what are the personal characteristics and processes of thriving in young men in geographically dislocating transitions? The results were presented in three parts:

Part One described the nature of the participant group in regard to a range of attributes identified in the literature as contributing to the opportunity to thrive. The selection of the group of young men was strategically designed to provide a cohort of comparable individuals experiencing a similar transition, rather than to imply characteristics specific to the gender or age-group. A group of valid and reliable instruments was used to examine general personality, psychological well-being, and the participants' sense of coherence. The results indicated the homogeneity of the participant group across a wide range of identified factors.

Part Two explored the contextual environment that surrounded the geographically dislocating transition, including responses from the administration staff in regard to the transition. The results also provided a measure of the impact of geographic dislocation across eight dimensions. All of the participants were significantly challenged by the geographically dislocating transition.

Part Three reported on the participant views of the geographically dislocating transition, drawn from the semi-structured interviews. The participants reflected on the experience of the transition and a thematic pattern was observed. The final 16 concepts containing the informing themes provided a discriminating matrix for the classification of the participants as having a *strong, moderate* or *weak* association with each of the identified concepts.

A secondary examination of the data allowed the categorisation of participants as *thriving, surviving* or *languishing* in each of the concepts. These categories

provided further evidence in regard to the characteristics and processes involved in the negotiation of the geographically dislocating transition. The congruency of this data with the statistical evidence that, in part, led to the inquiry was also described.

In both sections of Part Three, the coding was supported by extracts from the participant interview transcripts. These semi-structured interviews provided authentic and credible accounts of the geographically dislocating transition. Time frames for the negotiation of the transition were also considered.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to examine thriving in a geographically dislocating transition, taking into account the characteristics of the cohort and the dynamic processes of the transition. The study focused on 24 young male athletes who had experienced a geographic dislocation to enable them to take up their contractual opportunity with the Australian League Football (AFL).

The previous chapter provided descriptive evidence in regard to the nature of the participant group on a wide range of factors that the literature suggested might account for the differences in thriving or not thriving. The semi-structured interviews provided data for 16 attributable concepts for the transition that allowed the categorisation of the participant group into those that thrived, survived or languished in the face of the challenge. The concepts were then applied to a staged theory of transition that enabled the observation of the trajectories of the participants through the stages.

These chapter findings and their resonance with the informing literature are discussed. The relative homogeneity of the participant group and the particular characteristics that are shared are examined in detail. The 16 concepts and the evidence for the categorisation of participants into those that thrive, survive or languish in periods of geographic dislocation are linked to the discussion. The transition cycle and the significance of the concepts at each stage, and finally, the taxonomy of the transition for thriving in periods of geographic dislocation are discussed in detail.

5.0 The nature of the participant group

The participant group shared a number of features in common. They were all young men with ages ranging from 19 – 26 years; they volunteered to enter into the draft process and qualified on the strength of their athletic ability; and they were all required to relocate to an interstate club to take up their contractual responsibilities. The participants were tested on a range of instruments identified in the literature as significant indicators of the capacity to thrive (i.e. personality, well-being, and personal orientation). The participant group could be confidently described as a homogenous assembly of young men, tested on a range of valid and reliable instruments, for which the geographically dislocating transition posed a significant challenge. This was indicated in relation to each test below:

5.0.1 General personality

The NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992) scales measured dimensions of normal personality and provided a broad understanding of the individual and, for the purposes of this study, the participant group. This valid and reliable instrument described a brief, comprehensive measure of the five domains of personality. The interpretation indicated traits and offered the opportunity to explore the underlying processes of dealing with the challenge of the dislocating transition. In this study, the results in this test indicated that the participants were a remarkably similar group, described as secure and emotionally stable; sociable and active; curious yet conventional; selfless but competitive; purposeful but relaxed.

5.0.2 Well-being

The Scales of Psychological Well Being (SPWB) (Ryff, 2003) related well to the concept of thriving by focussing on learning and growth as important aspects of responding to a challenge (Park, 1998; Ryff & Singer, 2003). The setting of

personal goals, developing meaningful relationships, successfully managing the environmental demands and opportunities, exercising self-direction and developing self-regard, and striving to fulfil their potential are the measured parts of this multidimensional construct. The item descriptions provided a profile for the participant group and their efforts to thrive. While there was some minor variation across two items (autonomy and self-acceptance), the participant group was remarkably homogeneous.

5.0.3 Personal orientation (sense of coherence)

Antonovsky (1987, 1990a) proposed a personal orientation comprised of three components (a) comprehensibility: sense making of internal and external stimuli, (b) manageability: access to adequate resources to meet the demands of the stimuli, and (c) meaningfulness: where the demands are worthy of emotional investment and commitment. This was examined using the Orientation to Life Questionnaire (Antonovsky, 1987) to establish the participants' Sense of Coherence (SOC). In particular this instrument provided a summative profile for the participants as "... cognitively and emotionally capable of ordering the nature of problems and willing to confront them." (Pallant & Lae, 2002, p. 40) The similarity of the participant group continued in these dimensions.

5.0.4 Degree of dislocation

The Geographic Dislocation Scale (GDS) scale was devised by the author for this research to assess the experience of the transition moment. It was described in eight domains (i.e. control, apprehensiveness, excitement, security, loneliness, confidence, fear, and readiness) and a summative score was obtained. The findings show that the participants did not feel particularly lonely through the transition, nor did they feel afraid of the challenges awaiting them. However, they were generally apprehensive about the transition process; felt they lacked control over the process; were excited about the unfolding changes;

lacked a sense of security about their journey; were somewhat pessimistic about their capacity to thrive in the new environment; and did not feel as if they were appropriately prepared for the transition. In sum, the geographic dislocation presented a significant challenge, and one where they were required to make considerable personal adjustments and needed to regain the integrity of the self (Selder, 1989).

5.0.5 Summary

The findings on the range of testing instruments indicated that the participant group were a homogenous group of young men across a broad cross-section of variables. The selected instruments described the profiles of the participants in regard to five dimensions of personality, six dimensions of psychological well-being, the global orientation captured by their sense of coherence, and the experience of the geographically dislocating transition. In all these domains, all the members of the participant group showed similar results. Despite the group similarities in backgrounds and the current shared experience of the geographically dislocating transition, there were critical variations in their ability to thrive. These variations were not explained by individual variation on components identified as contributing to an ability to thrive, including well-being (e.g. Hobfoll et al., 2002; Ryff, 1989; Strauser, Lustig, & Ciftci, 2008), a sense of coherence (e.g. Antonovsky, 1987; Pallant & Lae, 2002; Strauser & Lustig, 2003), or dispositional characteristics (Costa & McCrae, 1992)

A deeper analysis of the subjective experience of the participants was required and this discussion is presented below.

Part One

Perceptions of the participants

This section provides an analysis of the data drawn from the semi-structured interviews, particularly the discriminating personal characteristics involved in thriving in periods of geographic dislocation.

The semi-structured interviews were based on the informing literature, and were designed to elicit responses to a range of issues identified as pertinent. The experiences were initially collected as themes and subsequently described as the 16 concepts of the geographically dislocating transition. These concepts provided a collective experience where the categories of 'thriving', 'surviving' and 'languishing' were indications of the participants' ability to shape a useful framework for negotiating the geographically dislocating transition.

5.1 Concepts

The 16 concept areas were analysed in terms of their defining and discriminating characteristics.

5.1.1 Readiness for the challenge

This concept provided an indication of participants' ability to engage the challenging transition in a purposeful way (Meleis et al., 2000). With varying degrees of success, the participants were able to 'weigh up' their initial reactions and to find ways of shaping a useful framework for negotiating the geographically dislocating transition process. In this way some participants could see the transition as purposeful (Chick & Meleis, 1986; Ryff & Singer, 2003), and avoid the distracting preoccupation with the characteristics of the new environment and the loss of the old (Burke, 1988; Moyle & Parkes, 1999; Munton & West, 1995; Noblet & Gifford, 2002). The data also pointed to the strategies the participants

employed to avoid the disabling move away from the familiar to the unfamiliar (e.g. Baldridge et al., 2006; Carter, 1999b; Elder jnr et al., 1996; Vernberg et al., 2006). The findings extended earlier research on vulnerability factors for transition , where the "...resourceful person is the person who knows more about what to expect in the new environment" (Fisher & Hood, 1988, p. 319). Rather than an event to be surmounted, the geographically dislocating transition was a process of reorientation (Bridges, 2004), and an awareness of the changes taking place and the manner in which they can be engaged. This underscored the importance of feeling situated, and to have a level of awareness to face the challenge in a meaningful way (Meleis et al., 2000).

Three main responses were found in this factor. The participants identified as thriving in this study had strong associations with the positive aspects of this concept, i.e. purposeful, aware and selective. In that context, their readiness was formed by astute reasoning and purposeful investigation. In addition, the thrivers were able to identify features of the transition that were familiar and, in regard to the dislocation, they were aware that it was a shared journey.

Those identified as surviving were broadly aware of the challenge ahead but found difficulty in defining it in any meaningful way. This was evident in the lack of congruence between their expectations and the experience (Chick & Meleis, 1986), where they struggled to visualise a pathway for their journey.

Those languishing at this early stage were unaware of the tasks that confronted them, nor the strategies that might be usefully devised or applied, and were clearly distinguished by their responses.

5.1.2 Motivation

This concept provided an indication of the participants' levels of willingness to engage in the geographically dislocating transition, and particularly whether their

approach was tentative or confident. In part, it explored the participants' optimism in response to the challenge. The pursuit of goals was value laden and contributed to the motivation and confidence of participants to commit to the dislocating process (Carver & Scheier, 1999; Scheier & Carver, 1985). Optimists in this context were likely to have more problem-focussed strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and mastery of the challenging demands through anticipatory coping and the management of perceived risks (Schwarzer & Knoll, 2003).

As effort and goal setting have emerged as core concepts in the motivation literature (e.g. Locke & Latham, 1990) these concepts were explored in regard to the preparations for adapting to the demands of the transition (Ashford & Taylor, 1990); their persistence despite a mismatch between expectations and actual experiences (Abbot-Chapman et al., 1992; Ballantyne, 2000; Tinto, 1993), and the coping strategies used to prepare for the transition (Anshel et al., 2001).

The data indicated that the participants' motivation was less related to their enthusiasm for the challenging tasks and more to their preparations for the transition and the application of their resources to accommodate the psychological need to plan for what is coming. The effort and goal setting in the current study, focussed on an understanding of the participants' movement between the familiar and unfamiliar environment (Meleis et al., 2000).

The participants identified as thriving could demonstrate strong associations with the positive aspects of this concept (i.e. they were confident, optimistic and had proactive coping strategies). This was particularly evident in their ability to understand and respond to feedback (Taylor, Fisher, & Ilgen, 1984; VandeWalle et al., 2001; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997), and their capacity to develop confidence in the transition pathways.

Those surviving were less confident and inclined to be overwhelmed by the challenge to move from the known to the unknown. They found it difficult to identify the priority tasks, and were motivated by the excitement of the occasion rather than an awareness of the strategic opportunity. They were less likely to seek feedback, and the influence of feedback was confusing and sometimes counterproductive. This is consistent with goal-orientation research (e.g. Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; VandeWalle et al., 2001) that indicates a risk of maladaptive responses when faced with feedback that is broadly critical.

Those languishing appeared bewildered by the experience and found little guidance in the assistance offered to them. They were excited by the prospect of the transition, but unable to motivate themselves in a way that was productive.

5.1.3 Positive planning

This concept explored the participants' ability to negotiate and plan personal pathways. It looked at levels of perceived control and strategies to be free from the past and engage with the new. In particular it enquired into the processes involved in leaving a familiar environment and embracing the new (Brett et al., 1993). It explored the uncertainty of relocation (Noblet & Gifford, 2002) and the ways in which uncertainty was reduced. Attachment to place (Elder jnr et al., 1996; Fisher, 1990b), and consequent difficulty in planning for the future, became part of the discriminating criteria. Similarly homesickness (Fisher, 1997; Stroebe et al., 2002; Thurber, 1999; Thurber & Weisz, 1997; van Tilburg, Eurelings-Bontekoe, Vingerhoets, & Van Heck, 1999) was explored in relation to the participants' planning focus.

The participants' reflections supported the view that learning to cope with separation from home involves the acquisition of resources concerned with the new environment (Fisher & Hood, 1988). This is consistent with Antonovsky's

(1987; 1998) generalised resistance resources and the idea of learned resourcefulness (Rosenbaum, 1988). However participants identified as thriving were able to demonstrate more particular associations with the positive aspects of this concept, i.e. assuredness, positive detachment, and confident planning. These resistance resources gave them the confidence to plan, exercise that planning and learn from the experience.

Those surviving were more guarded about the experience and felt their way through the process. Their expectations were often coloured by observations within the new environment and they struggled with the competing interests.

Those languishing were confused and struggled with the new responsibilities; they were consumed by fears of failing, rather than seeking support from others.

5.1.4 Comprehensibility

This concept explored the participants' grasp of concerns in the transition process. It looked particularly at whether the participants had a clear, ordered and structured understanding of the imminent challenge. This awareness is a defining characteristic of a successful transition (Meleis et al., 2000) and requires a timeframe that is enabling. To thrive in this transition required participants to understand what the journey might entail (Antonovsky, 1987) and the components of the challenging circumstance. This included perceptions of control (Moyle & Parkes, 1999), purpose (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2006), and confidence in their ability to master the new environment (Carver & Scheier, 1998a).

These data extended the existing research on thriving by looking more closely at the participants' understanding of the consequences of the geographic dislocation on their well-being. The participants identified as thriving could demonstrate strong associations with the positive aspects of this concept (i.e. a

positive vision, and an understanding what was required). They were aware of the process of transition and made specific requests for information in regard to what was required of them and the timeframes involved. They were positive about the experience and not deterred by a lack of information. This added to an understanding of the process of thriving and was consistent with the literature on goal orientation (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1994, 1996; Porath & Bateman, 2006), and the feedback-seeking process (VandeWalle et al., 2001; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997).

By contrast, the survivors were less clear about the tasks ahead and were inclined to follow the example of others rather than to understand the personal nature of the journey. The consequence was a misfit between expectations and reality (Chick & Meleis, 1986) and general confusion in regard to the manner in which they should engage with the transition tasks (Meleis et al., 2000).

Those at risk of languishing had little understanding of what was required of them and were only able to engage in the transition process in the most mechanical of ways. Consistent with Bridges' (2004) 'crisis' stage, the focus was on the disequilibrium and what resources will be effective. Those languishing struggled with the process from the outset, and information designed to be facilitating and supportive was confusing and bewildering.

5.1.5 Gaining confidence

This concept focussed on the participants' ability to learn lessons from the experience of dislocation (Ickovics & Park, 1998; O'Leary, 1998; Park, 1998) and looked more closely at disequilibrium between anticipated pathways and their experience. In particular it explored the importance of positive self-concepts (Van Breda, 1999), and the emerging understandings of what is required to successfully negotiate the new demands (Hobfoll, 1998; Oyen, 1998). The data

extended the research on thriving by looking more closely at the underlying characteristics attached to the learning process. Those more able to learn from the experience were confident and resourceful, and continued to apply their new-found skills to the challenge. This was consistent with earlier research on motivational processes for learning (e.g. Dweck, 1986) and the more recent conceptualisation of mastery described by Carver and Scheier (1998a). The trajectory for these participants was positive and they were able to apply themselves confidently to the requisite tasks.

This 'vortex' effect was apparent through the stages of the transition cycle (discussed more fully in Part Two below). It was consistent with other research (e.g. Spreitzer et al., 2005) that links self-adaptation with conditions that promote thriving, especially as "...individuals hold the keys to their own adaptive capacities by reading their psychological states and crafting their work in order to increase feelings of learning and energy" (p. 545). Similarly, transition research emphasised the abandonment of old strategies and learning new ones (Bridges, 2004), the requisite changes in assumptions and learning new behaviour (Schlossberg, 1989), and the cyclic pathways for learning, as the recursive, disjunctive but interdependent stages of a transition are negotiated (Nicholson, 1987). Ashford & Taylor (1990) also describe an interactive process between the individual and the organisation where "... individuals learn, negotiate, enact, and maintain the behaviors appropriate to a given organizational environment... to achieve valued goals" (p. 4)

This 'gained confidence' was the product of the learning process and participants were identified as thriving if they could demonstrate strong associations with the constructive aspects of this concept, i.e. positive self concepts, a capacity for recovery, and learning what was required to negotiate the transition.

Survivors were less confident about the transition and were still searching for direction in regard to the details of what was required of them. Their learning was haphazard and it was difficult for them to apply information and resources to the tasks they faced.

Those languishing found it difficult to describe a frame of reference for their transitional journey and were locked into strategies that did not serve them well and, as a consequence, their opportunities for productive learning were very limited.

5.1.6 Sense making

This concept focussed on the participants' ability to make sense of their experience in the context of the dislocating challenge. While all participants were keenly experiencing the new environment (Anshel & Wells, 2000; Fisher, 1990d; Stahl & Caliguri, 2005), only some were able to make sense of the transitions and associated challenges (Hobfoll, 1998; Ickovics & Park, 1998; Moos & Schaefer, 1986; Ryff & Singer, 2003). The data ranged from being bewildered and confused, to a watchful and adaptive recovery. Participants that struggled were pre-occupied with the characteristics of the new environment and the loss of the old one (Burke, 1988; Moyle & Parkes, 1999; Munton et al., 1993; Noblet & Gifford, 2002). Those doing well were able to learn from observations and make positive changes that gave them clarity of purpose (Carver & Scheier, 1998a).

These data contributed to the existing research on thriving in the context of geographic dislocation, where sense making was the selective abandonment of familiar support systems, and the selective acceptance of supports that make sense of the new surroundings. The willingness to relocate (Baldridge et al., 2006) was tempered by the passionate desire to take up the new opportunity. While the attitudes to relocation were reliably associated with relocation success

(e.g. Brett & Reilly, 1988), the participants' opportunity to thrive was contingent on their readiness for the transition (discussed above), and an acute awareness of the process (Meleis et al., 2000).

While thriving, and associated growth, "... can come only if the circumstance is malleable enough to permit gain" (Carver, 1998, p. 253), the thrivers in this study could demonstrate strong associations with the positive aspects of this concept, i.e. clarity of purpose, meaningful engagement, a commitment to the process, and a willingness to leave the old and embrace the new.

Those surviving struggled for clarity of direction, although they were beginning to understand the range of experiences involved in the transition. They were aware of the challenges and associated tasks (Chick & Meleis, 1986), but had difficulty in applying the knowledge (Moyle & Parkes, 1999; Noblet & Gifford, 2002). Further, they were inclined to see the transition and the challenge as a single entity, rather than a suite of demands.

Those languishing were confused and struggled for direction. They grasped at any opportunity and mimicked others to try a make sense of their experiences. To their dismay "...doing more of the same thing gives... more unsatisfactory results. Not seeing, or not accepting that the reality has changed, the individual no longer understands what is happening to him" (Nortier, 1995, p. 40). This frustration was understandable, as effort and resignation become polarised positions (Carver & Scheier, 1998a) and the participants became increasingly unable to have meaningful engagement.

5.1.7 Meaningfulness

This concept reflected the participants' ability to identify the components of the challenge as worthy of engagement, and their understanding of 'why' they were committing valuable resources to the components of the challenge (Antonovsky,

1987; Snyder, 1999a). Meaningful engagement (Meleis et al., 2000) allowed the participants to discriminate between the mundane tasks and those that enabled them in the transition process (Nicholson, 1987). This focussed orientation allowed thrivers to perform and learn (Porath & Bateman, 2006), and allowed them to calculate the worthiness of their engagement (Martocchio, 1994).

The data indicated that all participants saw the transition as significant, but not all of them were able to attach meaning to the suite of tasks required in the process. Those identified as thriving could demonstrate strong associations with the positive aspects of this concept, i.e. the significance of parts of the challenge as opposed to a bewildering whole, and a rational strategy for engagement. They were inclined towards a 'goal-learn' orientation (Porath & Bateman, 2006) where they were able to attach meaning to their efforts to negotiate the transition and devote the appropriate resources to the task.

Survivors were less able to identify the reasons for the engagement other than an amorphous expectation of the organisation, but one they were keen to fulfil. They were inclined towards a 'goal-prove' orientation (Porath & Bateman, 2006), had difficulty in finding meaning in the efforts, and attributed the dedication of resources as an external requirement.

Those that languished were inclined to a 'goal-avoid' orientation (Porath & Bateman, 2006) and found it difficult to attach meaning to any aspect of the transition. They were absorbed by the risk of error and were disabled by the process. In the most part they regarded the transition as a series of important, albeit meaningless, activities.

5.1.8 Engagement

This concept explored the participants' levels of engagement with the challenging tasks associated with the geographically dislocating transition. It inquired into

their sense of isolation (Bridges, 1995; Fisher, 1997; Peel, 2000; Shaffer et al., 2006), and their ability to involve themselves meaningfully in the adjustment tasks (Keyes & Magyar-Moe, 2003). This was also observed as a component of psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 2003), and the dichotomy between the efforts to maintain the old environment and engage with the new one (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983; Ryff, 1989). Similarly it inquired into demonstrated engagement such as information-seeking and executing thoughtful change through the learning process (Meleis et al., 2000).

These data indicated that those who were thriving were able to make the transition to the new environment with an open and receptive 'mindset'. They were optimistic about their ability to negotiate the dislocating challenge (Carver & Scheier, 1999), and were able to calculate what was required of them to succeed. In this sense they were able to make sense of the need to engage and identify the salient aspects of the challenge where engagement was to serve them well (Meleis et al., 2000; Snyder, 1999a). The worthiness of the engagement (Antonovsky, 1987, 1998) was a reflection of the participants ability to see meaning in the dedication of resources, and thrivers did this openly.

The survivors were more likely to be overwhelmed by the transition and wrestled with the competing emotions of leaving the past behind and engaging with the new environment (Fisher, 1997). This was consistent with earlier theories of attachment and loss (e.g. Bowlby, 1980) where the disorganisation and chaos are bewildering. Similarly it was consistent with the theories of role change and self-consciousness (Nicholson, 1984; Oatley, 1990; Oatley & Bolton, 1985) where one set of commitments is replaced by another, with accompanying anxiety, uncertainty, and pre-occupation with the changes that have occurred. In this regard, the survivor's enthusiasm for the move is tempered by their lack of

real engagement, and they find it difficult to discriminate among the engagement priorities.

Those that languished struggled to break with the old environment and engage with the new. They were beleaguered by the apparent volume of tasks and found their resources stretched to the full. They kept their old life 'on hold' and made tentative and weak overtures to engage with others in the new environment.

5.1.9 Role development

This concept was a reflection of the extent of the participants' altruism and their competitiveness in the context of the evolving role-fit relationship. It explored the strategies to develop autonomy in the new environment, their capacity for adaptation in regard to the demands of the new environment, and the dimensions of the transition (Nicholson, 1987; Ryff & Singer, 2003). It also inquired into the participants' feelings of connectedness to the new environment and the adjustments required for some mastery (Meleis et al., 2000).

These data indicated that the shared experience consisted of a single dislocation involving a radical change, with an indeterminate adjustment period. There was little autonomy and multiple adaptations required; and while the transition was facilitated by the organisation, the adjustment was highly individualised. The data were consistent with earlier work in regard to work-role transitions (Allen & Van de Vliert, 1984; Nicholson, 1984; Oatley, 1990) where those that thrived were able to select strategies that were 'stage appropriate' and likely to advance their adjustment without compromise.

The survivors had less insight into their opportunity to select strategies and were more likely to conform to group expectations irrespective of their suitability.

Those that languished were confused and tried to please others by conforming and applying themselves to strategies they have observed in others. They mimicked others, and resigned themselves to the outcomes that flowed from their efforts, rather than reflecting on the transition, their emerging role, and what had or had not worked for them.

5.1.10 Manageability

This concept described the perceptions of the participants' ability to meet the demands of the challenge (Antonovsky, 1987). It looked at the participants' ability to balance the competing interests of the new environment (including home and work) and the 'manageability' of the transition. In particular, it looked at the availability of resources for dealing with the impact of the geographic dislocation as the challenging transitional task. The data were consistent with earlier transition research (e.g. Sargent & Schlossberg, 1988) where the impact of the transition was keenly linked to (a) the characteristics of the transition, (b) the characteristics of the pre- and post-transition environments, and (c) the characteristics of the individual experiencing the transition. Similarly, the data resonated with Hobfoll's (1998) description of resources as the foundation of the stress response process, albeit in an unfamiliar social and cultural context.

The data indicated that the thrivers were able to identify resources and strategies to assist them in managing the component parts of the transition process. They had an acute awareness of the component parts of the challenge and were able to allocate resources accordingly, e.g. "When you first come down it's so exciting and it's so new... and you don't fully understand how long you could be away... you really understand how important the family side of it is when you've been away... but having that understanding from the club point of view is really helpful" (Participant 5). The thrivers were able to accommodate the pressure of the

dislocation with a balanced approach and a sense of the manageability of the requisite tasks.

The survivors were more likely to see the transition as a 'whole' rather than the component parts and were less able to access the resources or strategies to assist them. They were aware of the challenging circumstances, but unable to discriminate among the tasks. Survivors were still linked to the 'old ways' of coping (e.g. Moos & Holahan, 2003; Smider et al., 1996) and suffered in the dichotomy of awareness without direction.

Those that languished struggled to find the manageable aspects of the transition and were often overwhelmed by the apparent magnitude of the experience. They were confused and inclined to embark on strategies that were instinctive rather than connected to a frame of reference.

5.1.11 Support systems

This concept inquired into the nature and availability of the participants' support systems during the geographically dislocating transition. The presence of support was a key element to a successful transition (e.g. Dunkel-Schetter et al., 1987; Kobasa & Puccetti, 1983; MacIntosh, 1999; Valentiner et al., 1994). This has been widely described in earlier research from education settings (e.g. Arnold, 1990; Fisher & Hood, 1988; Stroebe et al., 2002), health settings (e.g. Kwan et al., 2001; Smider et al., 1996; Stokols, Shumaker, & Martinez, 1983), military deployment (e.g. Cleverley, 2001; Weber & Weber, 2005), and employment relocation (Forster, 1990; Lee, 1990; Luo & Cooper, 1990; Rodgers & Rodgers, 2000). The idea of social support included the psychological and material resources provided by others to assist the process of coping. This included information, social companionship, tangible resources and emotional support (for a comprehensive review, see Cohen, 2004). To thrive was to

mobilise the individual and social resources to facilitate positive physical, emotional and social outcomes (Ickovics & Park, 1998). It was the product of individual resources, social resources and the developmental process (O'Leary, 1998) that augured towards positive outcomes and buffered against the negative impact of stressors (Dumont & Provost, 1999).

These data indicated that thriving participants could identify and access support systems (including their immediate friends, family and supporters); and new systems in the form of structures and routines. The more subtle aspects included the participants' perceptions of these being available, or of value to their particular circumstance. The thrivers were able to identify and use support systems from a variety of sources and select those of most value.

The survivors were able to identify the support systems around them, but found it more difficult to access them in a timely fashion, e.g. "I still kind of learning now because I haven't had, like, a family figure to like tell me all these things, so I have to learn by myself, yeah, so it's been tough" (Participant 18).

These data indicated that those that languished had difficulty identifying sources of support and were troubled investing trust in them. They were consumed by the challenge and clung to dislocated support systems in an effort to survive.

5.1.12 Personal development

This concept provided an indication of participants' ability to process the experience of the geographic dislocation in a meaningful way and to learn from the experience, i.e. to thrive (e.g. O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995; Spreitzer et al., 2005). The concept included the participants' openness to new experiences and positive acceptance of change (Ryff & Singer, 2003), and their ability to draw meaning from their experiences (e.g. Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001; Meleis et al., 2000; O'Leary, 1998; Park, 1998), particularly where positive, albeit personally

structured, meaning was attached to the particular transition. In that regard, it was interesting to note the variety of participant organisational skills in creating order from the chaos (Nicholson, 1990; Nicholson & West, 1988) (see 'meaningfulness' above).

These data indicated the participants' ability to learn from the experience of geographic dislocation and the transition to the new environment and draw strength from the experience. The participants who thrived were able to identify development pathways and the learning experiences that characterised the process, e.g. seeking feedback to allay concerns (Porath & Bateman, 2006). They were comfortable with the demands made of them and were able to derive substantial satisfaction from the progress they made.

The survivors were able to identify aspects of the development process, but not the sense of satisfaction as issues remained unresolved. They were prepared to work hard towards their goals, but were less able to glean understanding from the experience.

Those who languished were more likely to feel a sense of personal stagnation as the directions and processes were not well understood. They were unable to identify particulars from general praise, and were disabled by criticism.

5.1.13 Relationship building

This concept provided an indication of the participants' ability to form meaningful and sustained relationships after the geographic dislocation. By definition, the participants had left many of their friends and family behind and were obliged to look for alternate relationships or remain isolated. In that regard, the participants shifting attachments were examined (Bowlby, 1980), as were the strategies employed to form new friendships and embrace the new environment. The relocation concerns, including missing family and friends and adjusting to

independent living (Noblet & Gifford, 2002) weighed heavily on some of the participants and limited their ability to thrive in the new environment. The importance of particular relationships was evident, e.g. medical staff for recuperating participants (Stevenson et al., 2003) and coaching staff (e.g. Hardy et al., 1996; Messner, 1992).

The participants identified as thriving demonstrated genuine warmth towards others and were active by looking to engage with others. They had both the team and personal well-being in mind and were not anxious about the hierarchical nature of the new environment. They were willing to build on a simple framework from a new beginning, e.g.:

> "...if you talk to the guys who have played the game, it's not just about getting down to training and achieving something together... it's being around and the camaraderie with the players...it's really hard to describe" (Participant 05).

Those relationships were especially important where they promoted independence rather than dependence.

By contrast, the survivors were able to identify the relationships that had been formed and could appreciate the camaraderie that existed but they were less sure of the lessons learned from the experience that might allow them to thrive. They were aware of the hierarchical nature of the organisation and were keen to obtain the approval of others (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Porath & Bateman, 2006) rather than forge a relationship. They were aware of the rarefied environment and reticent about seeking relationships that were not offered as mentoring processes.

Those that languished struggled with relationship and were disturbed by the transient nature of the friendships that were formed. They found it difficult to

invest their trust and learn from the experience, and were reluctant to sever the relationships from before the transition in case their need for them reappeared (Fisher, 1997; Ryff & Singer, 2000).

5.1.14 Environmental mastery

This concept provided an indication of the participants' ability to learn to control and influence their environment. In particular it involved the mastery of strategies to account for the disparity between expectations and experience. Bergland & Kirkevold (2001) describe the learning process involved in thriving as the acquisition of new skills and knowledge that "...may promote mastery of similar situations in the future" (p.427). This concept also embraced an understanding of well-being (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2003) where creative and selective control governed the extent to which an individual identifies and uses resources to manipulate complex environments.

In the transition literature also, the sensitive awareness of the dislocating challenge is important to the motivation to search for new meaning and to begin the process of mastery of the new environment (Bridges, 1986, 2004; Nortier, 1995; Taylor, 1989). Similarly, Nicholson's (1987) model involves a complex cycle of transition where the patterns of response provide a sense of mastery that contributes to stability; and a platform for the recursive process to begin again.

Participants were observed in regard to their demonstration of mastery of the new environment, exampled by a sense of control and competence. These data indicated that those who were thriving were able to show they had a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the new environment and were able to access the necessary resources to establish a satisfactory level of mastery. They were not concerned with the separation from the old environment

and were more likely to attribute their success to clarity of direction, rather than luck. They could identify the trajectory of their transition and the signposts along the way. In particular they were able to learn from the range of experiences and to apply that understanding to a more positive approach to the challenges of the dislocation.

The survivors had a blurred sense of the new environment and lacked the self-confidence to attribute their competence to anything except luck, or compliance to the expectations they had identified. The survivors lacked a sense of direction and were inclined to resign themselves to the requirements of the new environment, rather than to take stock of what was required to thrive and develop mastery. They understood that change had occurred but found it difficult to identify the particulars of the transition.

Those who languished struggled with the new environment and had few strategies to deal with the new challenges. They clung to old habits and lacked the confidence to leave those patterns that had become familiar. They articulated consistent concerns that they 'felt outside' of the new environment, despite being part of it and struggled to find a place where they felt included and in control. They resorted to strategies of mimicry and blind obedience to try to immerse themselves in the new environment, but lacked the subtle insights.

5.1.15 Trust and commitment

This concept provided an indication of the participants' levels of assurance in their negotiation of the geographically dislocating transition and their confidence in the future. In particular it explored the participants' ability to navigate the time-bounded aspects of their transition in a meaningful way (Nicholson, 1987). Trust is a complex phenomenon and not the specific focus of this study, however it is an acknowledged factor for well-being (Connell et al., 2003), and generally

described as the 'willingness to be vulnerable' (Mayer et al., 1995). It also shares many of the facet qualities emerging in the discussion, e.g. integrity, competence, consistent behaviour, loyalty and openness (Clark & Payne, 1997). The notion of trust in this context was the ability to 'let go' of concerns and to allocate resources in a timely fashion, e.g. an understanding of the challenging dynamics of the transition. Similarly, commitment to the future involved an understanding of the process events of the transition and acknowledgement of the next phase of the transition as trustworthy (Mayer et al., 1995).

The data indicated that those that thrived had a vivid impression of their journey since the dislocating moment and a clear agenda for the next stage. They were able to 'let go' of their concerns and were receptive to the challenge of embracing the new environment. They felt reassured by the 'solidarity' of membership of the group and did not feel susceptible to the pressures that surrounded them.

The survivors were less assured and the dislocation was still a poignant reference point for them as they contemplated the next stage of the transition. There was significant hesitation in their willingness to commit to the next phase of the transition; a legacy of their uncertainty through the experience of the transition.

Those languishing experienced difficulty in balancing the experience of the transition with a future agenda, and they could not discriminate between strategies that had been useful and those that had not served them well. They questioned the trust they had invested in the process to this point and searched for alternatives in a random exploration of possibilities. They were not willing to 'let go' of the past and found it difficult to commit to the future.

5.1.16 Discretion

This concept was a reflection of the ability of the participants' having the scope to determine the content and scheduling of the transition, i.e. to plan personal pathways. Despite the rigidity of the new environment, the process was highly personalised and the expectations for individuals were wide-ranging. The concept included the uncertainty of relocation (Noblet & Gifford, 2002) with a particular focus on the formal and informal pathways. Discretion was often unplanned, and was often the product of the gaps in the system (Nicholson, 1987). Accordingly, the ambiguity of discretion and accountability was significant as the participants moved to a more unfamiliar environment and struggled for markers of progress (Black & Ashford, 1995; West et al., 1987).

These data indicated the participants' discretion was a factor in their perceptions of ability to navigate the transition. These data complement earlier research (e.g. Black & Ashford, 1995; Nicholson, 1984) by indicating that a transition to a structured and low discretion environment may still require discretionary thinking and planning to navigate it successfully.

The participants identified as thriving were aware of the dominant structure of the environment, but were able to act autonomously and appeared to have the freedom to make decisions and choices. They chose carefully from limited options and learned quickly about the benefits of independent thinking (Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001; O'Leary, 1998). They were also able to set goals and self-regulate behaviour (Porath & Bateman, 2006).

The survivors were more constrained and lacked the confidence to exercise their independence. They struggled to interpret advice and feedback (VandeWalle et al., 2001) and were more inclined to follow the lead of others than to exercise discretion. They were acutely aware of the structures of the new environment

and longed for approval for the efforts they made (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Porath & Bateman, 2006).

Those languishing were unable to make important decisions, and were limited by the perceived constraints of the new environment. They were dependent on the structure around them and resigned to the pathways outlined for them.

5.2 Summary

This study examined the complex personal issues involved in thriving in periods of geographically dislocating transitions. The informing literature and data collected in this study indicated that there was a potential for the expansion of capacity for well-being, enhanced by self-knowledge, through challenging circumstances (Spreitzer et al., 2005). It indicated that an interaction of individual resources, social resources and the developmental process might produce positive outcomes (e.g. Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001; O'Leary, 1998), and the consequential growth through learning and enhanced well-being could be described as thriving (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995; Park, 1998; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

The findings indicated that, on a broad range of psychological instruments, the participant group was very similar. They were a relatively homogenous group on measures of personality, well-being, and personal orientation, whereas on external indicators (i.e. AFL data) some participants succeeded and others failed, and the reasons were unclear.

However, on the reported data, a more complex pattern appeared where some participants *thrived,* some *survived* and some *languished.* To date, these data indicated that thriving in the context of geographic dislocation was a dynamic process comprised of 16 concepts, each contributing to the whole. The salient associated processes were confirmed through the iterations of the data analysis

and referenced to the underlying themes and supporting literature (see Table 3.4: Matrix for coding links to literature, pp. 66-68).

PART TWO

The Thriving Process

This section provides further analysis of the data drawn from the semi-structured interviews, particularly the discriminating personal processes involved in thriving in periods of geographic dislocation. The attribution of the concepts to the stages of the geographically dislocating transition enabled the analysis of the categories of 'thriving', 'surviving' and 'languishing' at each of the stages. It also provided the opportunity to analyse the process trajectories as the transition cycle was negotiated.

5.3 Transitions as a process

The characteristics of a transition have been described in the literature (e.g. Bridges, 2004; Nicholson, 1987; Schlossberg, 1989; Selder, 1989) and the summary consensus has been that for individuals to negotiate a transition they needed to:

(a) make sense of the challenge and identify the demands and constraints;

(b) identify the required changes to best adapt;

(c) act on these decisions to adapt to the transition; and

(d) manage the stresses that emerge from these negotiations.

The negotiation of the transition was also subject to the consequences that flowed from the intersection of several factors (Schlossberg, 1989) including:

(a) the character of the transition (Nicholson, 1987, 1990),

(b) personal factors (McCrae & Costa, 1986)

(c) situational factors (e.g. Bridges, 1995; Nortier, 1995; Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Pancer, 2000).

Transition has been described as a linear process involving the abandonment of the familiar, a period of disequilibrium and a new beginning (Bridges, 1986). It has also been described as a progression from separation, through disequilibrium to a productive equilibrium and stability (Nortier, 1995). Similarly Selder (1989) described a transition as the disruption of an existing reality requiring the resolution of uncertainty, where making sense of the new situation is pivotal to the healthy decision making. These largely linear processes were challenged by Schlossberg (1984; 1989) who described a more personal account where the experience of the transition was the product of the characteristics of the experience of the transition, the individual, and the resources available to the individual. Schlossberg (1989) described the opportunity to resolve a challenging transition was a product of the dispositional characteristics of the individual, previous experiences, support systems and the selected strategies used in the adjustment process. Despite this scaffolding, the experience of negotiating a challenging transition was not well understood.

5.3.1 The 'Thriving Transition Cycle'

The informing literature on thriving (e.g. Aspinwall, 2001; Carver, 1998; Ickovics & Park, 1998; O'Leary, 1998; Porath & Bateman, 2006; Spreitzer et al., 2005), provided the support for placement of the 16 concepts on the Nicholson (1987) transition cycle to provide a staged process to the participant's experience. The transition cycle provided the scaffolding for a more detailed understanding of the transition process. In particular, it provided the structure to gather each of the 16 concepts in one of four recursive, disjunctive but interrelated stages, and to explore the process interaction that allowed an individual to thrive. The participant scores that supported the general categories of thriving, surviving and languishing were also explored at the stages of the transition and a consistent pattern observed, i.e. the trajectories from one stage to the next were consistent

and supported the notion that the resolution of the tasks at an earlier stage was an important marker for the resolution of future tasks. Therefore the opportunity to thrive in geographically dislocating transitions was a dynamic process.

The transition cycle described by Nicholson (1987; 1990) was ascribed with stage related concepts (i.e. and the concept related tasks and goals), and provided a template for observation of the thriving process.

At the transition Stage One, thriving was a factor of 4 concepts (and 20 underlying themes) comprised of (1) readiness for the challenge; (2) motivation; (3) positive planning; and (4) an ability to comprehend the component parts of the challenge (see Appendix P (i), 'Expanded Theme, Stage One'). At Stage Two, thriving was a factor of 4 concepts (and 16 underlying themes) comprised of (1) gaining confidence; (2) sense making; (3) finding the transition meaningful and worthy of engagement; and (4) the process of engaging in the transition (see Appendix P (ii), 'Expanded Theme, Stage Two) . At Stage Three, thriving was a factor of 4 concepts (and 16 underlying themes) comprised of (1) finding the transition manageable; (2) awareness of and access to support systems; (3) competitive awareness of the new role and the personal requirements; and (4) personal growth and development (see Appendix P (iii), 'Expanded Theme, Stage Three'). At Stage Four, thriving was a factor of 4 concepts (and 14 underlying themes) comprised of (1) a mastery of the new environment; (2) a sense of trust and commitment to the new framework; (3) a new autonomy and independent thinking; and (4) mature and sustained relationships with whom the transition was shared (see Appendix P (iv), 'Expanded Theme, Stage Four). This resulted in a 'thriving transition cycle' for geographically dislocated young men, with the concepts attributed to the stages of the transition (see Figure 5.1 below).

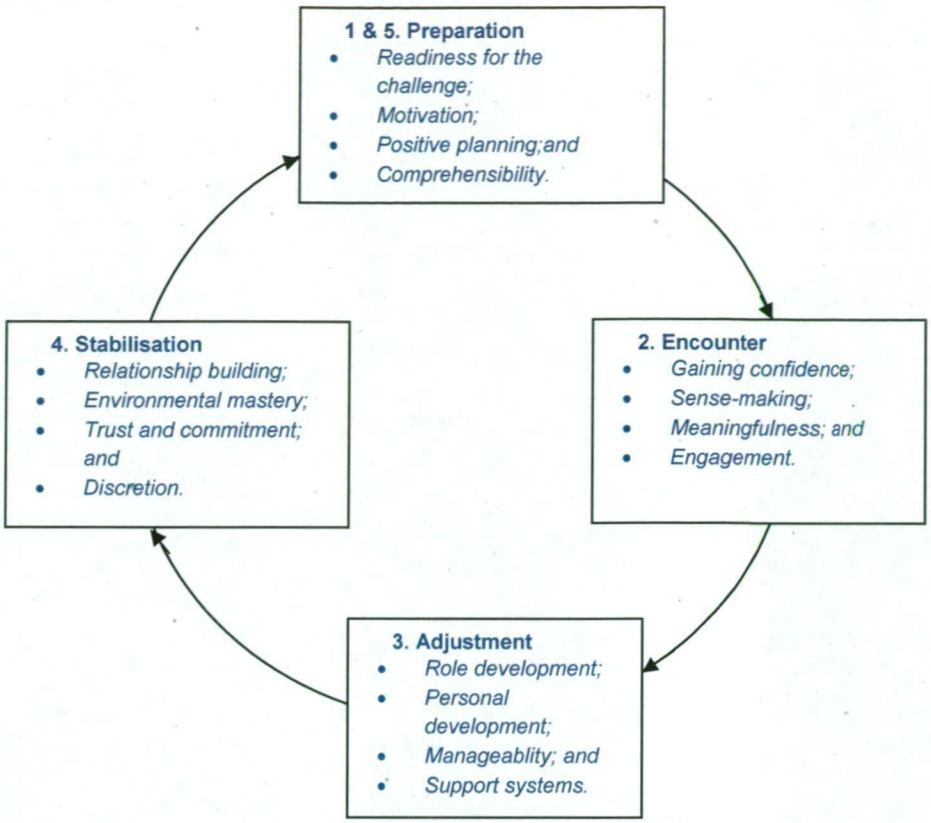

Figure 5.1 **The Thriving Transition Cycle: attributed concepts (adapted from Nicholson, 1987)**

The staging process provided an opportunity to separate and observe the journey through the dislocating transition and produced a better understanding of thriving in those circumstances.

5.3.2 The categories in the stages of transition

The 'stage concepts' provided the structure for the examination of thriving and, while static at the stages, this was observed as a dynamic process as the participants negotiated the challenging circumstances. The concepts provided discriminating values for the participants to be re-classified into the categories of (i) thriving; (ii) surviving; and (iii) languishing at each of the transition stages. The tabulated results for the individual participants are illustrated in the table below (see Table 5.1) and reflect the combination of each of the four concepts at each transition stage.

Participants	Preparation Range 0 - 40 C/Alpha: 0.9005 Mean: 22.00 S/D: 7.17	Encounter Range 0 - 40 C/Alpha: 0.8171 Mean: 20.82 S/D: 7.06	Adjustment Range 0 - 40 C/Alpha: 0.8918 Mean: 21.14 S/D: 7.46	Stability Range 0 - 40 C/Alpha: 0.9069 Mean: 21.27 S/D: 8.05
1	33.25	35	31.5	32
2	13.5	9	9.5	10.5
3	32.5	32.5	30.25	32.5
4	17.5	20	19.5	24
5	33	32.75	31.25	31
6	23.5	22.5	22.75	27
7	15.5	16.25	15.25	23
8	25.75	19.5	25.25	25.5
9	29.25	28	28	29.5
10	25.25	23	24.25	18.5
11	9.5	8.75	7.75	5
12	16	16.5	14	21
13	27.75	19.5	26.25	25
14	21.75	24.25	32.25	25.5
15	10	9	8.25	3.5
16	29	24.25	21.75	19
17	23.25	19.25	22.5	22.5
18	18.25	21.5	18.75	20
19	24.5	20	24.5	27
20	22.75	25.25	18.25	20
21	29	25.75	28.5	22.5
22	9.75	13.25	11.5	9.5
23	19.25	21	23	27
24	18.25	13	12.75	9.5

Table 5.1 **Tabulated results within transition stages**

The discriminating concept characteristics indicated thriving throughout the transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987), albeit predicated by three assumptions; (a) it was recursive and the possibility of future change remains; (b) it was disjunctive and each stage had its own qualities; and (c) it was interdependent, where the experience of one stage had a powerful influence on the next.

In that regard, the study data suggested a linking/learning characteristic for thriving that connected the concepts (i.e. the concept, if well resolved, behaved as a powerful platform for the following stages of the transition). While this phenomenon was acknowledged by Nicholson (1987; 1990), in this study it was

possible to identify the connections through the particular concepts and associated processes. The grouping of participants was determined by the clarity of their results, with three distinct groups emerging and two further groups representing the boundaries (see Table 5.2 below).

Partic.	Preparation C/Alpha: 0.9005 Range: 0-40 Mean: 22.00 S/D: 7.17	Encounter C/Alpha: 0.8171 Range 0-40 Mean: 20.82 S/D: 7.06	Adjustment C/Alpha: 0.8918 Range: 0-40 Mean: 21.14 S/D: 7.46	Stability C/Alpha: 9069 Range: 0-40 Mean: 21.27 S/D: 8.05	Total	Boundaries
1	33.25	35	31.5	32	131.75	
5	33	32.75	31.25	31	128	
3	32.5	32.5	30.25	32.5	127.75	
9	29.25	28	28	29.5	114.75	
21	29	25.75	28.5	22.5	105.75	
14	21.75	24.25	32.25	25.5	103.75	
13	27.75	19.5	26.25	25	98.5	
8	25.75	19.5	25.25	25.5	96	
19	24.5	20	24.5	27	96	
6	23.5	22.5	22.75	27	95.75	
16	29	24.25	21.75	19	94	
10	25.25	23	24.25	18.5	91	
23	19.25	21	23	27	90.25	
17	23.25	19.25	22.5	22.5	87.5	
20	22.75	25.25	18.25	20	86.25	
4	17.5	20	19.5	24	81	
18	18.25	21.5	18.75	20	78.5	
7	15.5	16.25	15.25	23	70	
12	16	16.5	14	21	67.5	
24	18.25	13	12.75	9.5	53.5	
22	9.75	13.25	11.5	9.5	44	
2	13.5	9	9.5	10.5	42.5	
11	9.5	8.75	7.75	5	31	
15	10	9	8.25	3.5	30.75	

Table 5.2 **Participant clusters**

Thriving | Surviving | Languishing

The concepts within a stage provided an indication of the participants' category as 'thriving, surviving, or languishing', as the responses for each participant were examined. On the margins there was a 'boundary' factor which suggests a dynamic process at work within the participant group.

The identified 'thrivers' consisted of four principal participants (1, 3, 5 and 9) with three additional participants (13, 14, and 21) from the boundary group where the scores indicated proximity. The identified 'languishers' consisted of four principal participants (2, 11, 15 and 22) with three additional participants (7, 12 and 24) from the boundary group where scores indicate proximity. The 'survivor' group (participants 4, 6, 8, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 23) comprise the remainder, bracketed by the aforementioned boundary groups (see Appendices Q (i – iv), 'Ascription to Categories') at each of the stages.

5.4 Adjustment strategies

The participants were in a transition involving low levels of discretion and high novelty (Nicholson, 1987, 1990). Consistent with this transition literature, the expected adjustment strategies were (a) absorption, consisting of individual adjustment to meet the expectations of the new role; with learning and personal development as a consequence, or (b) exploration, consisting of simultaneous change in personal and role boundaries; with growth and learning through innovation. There was less likelihood of (c) determination, where the role was changed to suit the purposes of the individual, and (d) replication, where the fit for the individual was so familiar that the skills and competencies acquired before the transition were transferable and adequate. These data indicated a more dynamic set of adjustment strategies. Consistently through the stages of the transition, the participants in each category showed a preference for a range of adjustment strategies that reflected the relative success of the transition, and the trajectory of the participant through the stages of the transition.

The dynamic nature of this process indicated that the opportunity to thrive in periods of geographic dislocation was a staged progression and that the growth and learning associated with the adjustment strategies complemented the positive trajectory of a transition well resolved. These data indicated that those

participants that thrived were more likely to use the adjustment strategies of (a) exploration; supplemented by (b) absorption. These strategies were characterised by growth, learning and personal development and a positive trajectory to the following stages of the transition.

Those surviving were inclined to the strategies of (a) absorption; supplemented by (b) replication, where their first efforts involved personal adjustment and associated learning, but where subsequent efforts returned to strategies that had served them well in the past, but had little application for the current transition challenge. Their consequent trajectory through the transition was inconsistent, with moments of positive progress and other moments of stagnation.

Those languishing were inclined to (a) replication; supplemented by (b) absorption, where their first efforts were to rely on the strategies and patterns that had served them to the beginning of the transition, and to which they clung as the transition unfolded. They had moments of personal adjustment (absorption) but were less likely to understand the lessons learned from the experience or able to apply these to the future challenges. The consequent trajectory for their passage through the transition was problematic.

These patterns are illustrated in Table 5.3 below, where the dominant adjustment strategy appears first with the supplementary strategy in parenthesis. The trajectories indicated reflect the participants' ability to thrive through the transition process, (i.e. to learn and grow, and apply their new understanding to the challenge).

	Thriving	Trajectory	Surviving	Trajectory	Languishing	Trajectory
Stage 1 Preparation	Exploration (Absorption)	⇧ ⇧	Absorption (Replication)	⇧ ⇨	Replication (Absorption)	⇩ ⇨
Stage 2 Encounter	Exploration (Absorption)	⇧ ⇧	Absorption (Replication)	⇧ ⇨	Replication (Absorption)	⇩ ⇨
Stage 3 Adjustment	Exploration (Absorption) (Determination)	⇧ ⇧ ⇧	Replication (Absorption)	⇩ ⇨	Replication	⇩
Stage 4 Stability	Exploration Absorption Determination	⇧ ⇧ ⇧	Replication (Absorption)	⇩ ⇨	Replication	⇩

Positive trajectory that promotes learning, growth and personal development:	⇧
Neutral trajectory with the possibility of some learning, growth and personal development:	⇨
Negative trajectory that is unlikely to promote learning, growth or personal development:	⇩

Table 5.3 **Adjustment strategies in transitions (based on Nicholson, 1987)**

5.5 The character of the transition

In addition to the cyclical model, Nicholson (1987) also provided a nine-dimensional taxonomic system through which a particular transition could be profiled (see Table 2.3, p. 35). This study considered the study categories (i.e. thriving, surviving and languishing) in relation to the complex intersections of speed, amplitude, symmetry, continuity, discretion, complexity, propulsion, facilitation, and significance.

5.5.1 Speed

This dimension examined the frequency of the geographically dislocating transition and related transitions. Multiple changes were required for the participants to move from their original environment to the organisational framework. While the transition was a single, predictable occurrence, it was a multi-dimensional process. Those that thrived avoided the frustration of the organisation 'blueprint' by a sense of ownership in the process. The excitement of the transition was a shared experience, however the thrivers sense-making ability and receptiveness to learning marked them as maximising the opportunity. It related to the intersecting dimensions (ID) of 'complexity, propulsion and facilitation', and was significant in regard to the trajectory of the participant as the cycle continued. The complexity (ID 6) was high and compounded by the range of experiences of the participants negotiating the same transition. The participants were aware of the broad expectations, but meaningful information was not readily available. The thrivers had the patience to wait, ask and respond appropriately; whereas those surviving or languishing were more likely to feel overwhelmed by the expectations. The propulsion (ID 7) was a mutual dimension, where participants had actively sought the opportunity to join the organisation. Nevertheless the readiness of the participant to negotiate the tasks of the transition varied considerably. The excitement of the opportunity was quickly tempered by their readiness for the challenge (see Stage 1, p. 176). Facilitation (ID 8) was a positive contributor to the transition process and the formal and informal support systems were active. However the ability of the participants to access the right support was problematic. Those thriving were able to select information and support in a timely and apposite manner, while those who were surviving or languishing had difficulty selecting the right support

and were inclined to respond enthusiastically to all forms of support regardless of their suitability.

5.5.2 Amplitude

This dimension examined the breadth of the required changes brought on by the transition. For geographically dislocated participants this required dramatic changes to their domestic and work environments. The impact of these was often a subjective process where those that thrived were able to transfer experience and confidence to the new environment and learn what was required of them. Thrivers relished the day-to-day challenges and were not overwhelmed by the collective experience. Those surviving and languishing were inundated by the radical nature of the changes and the apparent novelty of the new environment. There was low discretion (ID 5). Despite encouraging participants to exercise their independence, little time or flexibility was provided. This was confusing for participants, especially those who struggled to balance the competing priorities of the organisation. The thrivers adapted quickly to the restricted discretion and exercised their autonomy within tighter boundaries, whereas those surviving or languishing found the mixed messages confounding. The intersecting dimension of symmetry (ID 3) addressed the shape of the cycle and the time spent in negotiating the tasks at each stage. Those who were thriving had the most symmetrical cycle with the tasks of each stage being 'well resolved' and the processes attached contributing to the learning required to move on. In particular, the negotiation of Stage 2 (see p. 178) and Stage 3 (see p. 180) shaped the trajectory of participants. The successful resolution of these tasks created the trajectory towards stability (Stage 4), whereas an inability to reconcile these tasks prolonged the transition through the cycle, sometimes indeterminably. The intersecting dimension of continuity (ID 4) addressed the connecting between transition cycles and the idea of a recognisable pathway.

The amplitude of change experienced by those geographically dislocated was tempered by previous experience, but did not explain the variety of outcomes. Those thriving were able to apply the lessons learned from previous experience and account for the differences. For those surviving or languishing, the previous experience was a resource but its relevance to the tasks associated with the current dislocation was not easily recognisable. The intersecting dimension of discretion (ID 5) again indicated that the radical nature of the change required the exercise of discretion, or submission to the systematic processes. Those thriving were able to exercise discretion judiciously and maintain a degree of autonomy, whereas those surviving or languishing were more likely to submit to the organisational blueprint. The intersecting dimension of facilitation (ID 8) challenged the ability of the participant to identify the appropriate resources and support systems to assist with the radical nature of the change. Those that thrived were able to prioritise the tasks required of them at each of the stages of the transition and to engage meaningfully with the support systems. Those that were surviving or languishing were baffled by the competing demands and were unable to access support systems in a manner that was facilitative.

5.5.3 Symmetry

This dimension referred to the 'shape' of the transition cycle and the relative time spent at each of the stages. For the geographically dislocated participants in this study, this was a reflection of the tasks of the stages being 'well resolved'. For those that thrived this was evidenced by the successful resolution of the ascribed tasks and the application of the learning to recursive stages. The asymmetry that was apparent was identified in Stage 2 (Encounter) and Stage 3 (Adjustment) where those surviving and languishing were delayed in their progress and had levels of unsatisfactory resolution of the tasks. The interdependent nature of the transition cycle meant that the difficulties experienced at Stage 2 compounded

the difficulties experienced at Stage 3. The intersecting dimension of amplitude (ID 2) was evident where the volume and radical nature of the challenge associated with the geographic dislocation impacted on the participants' ability to resolve the associated tasks. Those that thrived were able to move through the stages with a positive trajectory and learned from each task, whereas those surviving and languishing were troubled by the component tasks and spent an inordinate amount of time wrestling with the demands. Their trajectory was often non-specific (i.e. surviving) or negative (i.e. languishing) and the move to a degree of stability on the transition cycle became more problematic. The intersecting dimension of complexity (ID 6) was particularly poignant for this study, as the complex transitions required multiple adaptations. The range of social and task adjustments that were required made the symmetry of the cycle more difficult. Those that thrived found the tasks comprehensible, manageable and meaningful and were able to learn from the staged process and make significant progress. Those surviving and languishing were often overwhelmed and bewildered by the complexity of the transition and became 'locked' in a loop between Stage 2 (Encounter) and Stage 3 (Adjustment). The intersecting dimension of facilitation (ID 8) proved again that the usefulness of support systems was a factor of the trajectory the transition and the ability to resolve the tasks in a way that is enabling. Those thriving were able to move through the transition cycle in a symmetrical pathway; and to seek and use support to assist their resolution of tasks and to aid their learning. Those surviving and languishing wrestled with the competing demands and became trapped in an asymmetrical pathway.

5.5.4 Continuity

This dimension referred to the connection between transitions and the emergent pathways for progress. For the participants in this study, this was a journey of

several parts. At first it involved the activity that qualified them for selection in the 'draft' of players for the Australian Football League (AFL). That journey was intended to prepare them for the rigors of the new environment and give them some insight into the expectations of the new environment, if selected. The reality was something quite different, and the competitive nature of the organisations and the confidentiality issues surrounding the 'draft' process, meant there was little real preparation. The second journey was one to the destination determined by the 'draft' and the associated expectations. While the participants had a general idea of what might await them, they were generally poorly prepared for the geographically dislocating transition and the expectations of the organisation. While this had the 'rites of passage' message attached to the transition, it did little to prepare the participants for the tasks ahead. Those who thrived could envisage a career path and were able to identify the staged processes and incremental learning that was required. Those surviving were aware of the organisational pathways, but had difficulty identifying their own place in the plan. Those languishing found the dislocating aspects of the transition confusing; they could not attach purpose to the activities and were generally trapped in a transition they did not understand. The intersecting dimension of amplitude (ID 2) meant that the sweeping new demands of the transition had the potential to disrupt the connections between transitions. Those thriving could make the useful associations between the experiences that had brought them to the current transition and extract the useful information learned along the way. Those surviving and languishing struggled to see the links between the transitions and were beleaguered by the amplitude of the challenge. The intersection dimension of propulsion (ID 7) referred to the causal origins of the transition cycle and the underlying motives. For this study the participants were universally motivated and excited by the idea of the transition, but variously limited by the subsequent degrees of control and scheduling. Those thriving

could pace themselves through the transition and apply themselves to the transition tasks; resolving these in contemplation of the pathways ahead. Those surviving and languishing could not contemplate anything beyond the immediate challenge and, although personally motivated, they were frustrated by the apparent barriers presented by the system.

5.5.5 Discretion

This dimension referred to the ability of the participants to determine the content and scheduling of the experiences in the transition stages. The geographically dislocating challenge meant that the participants were thrust into a new environment with little preparation. Their resolution of the tasks at Stage 1 (see p. 176) began a pattern of exercising discretion that would provide them with levels of confidence for the stages to follow. For example, at Stage 1, positive planning was the exercise of discretion within the limited boundaries of the organisation. Those thriving were able to identify the limited opportunities to exercise discretion, but to use them deliberately and judiciously. They could plan ahead and learn from the information sought and provided. Those surviving and languishing were restricted by the lack of discretion and were reluctant to test the boundaries of the organisation. The 'gaps' in the organisational structure were not optimised and these participants laboured under the burden of personal accountability. The intersecting dimension of amplitude (ID 2) meant that array of challenges associated with the geographical dislocation were more acutely felt by those trying to exercise discretion. Those thriving were able to take a moderate approach to this dilemma and look for the opportunities that would take them forward in a controlled manner. They were able to identify creative outlets for the exercise of limited discretion and to balance the organisational expectations with personal adjustments. Those surviving found the opportunities for exercising discretion to be ambiguous and were concerned for the

consequences. Those languishing were less confident and were reluctant to take that 'chance'; so were less likely to exercise the discretion opportunities as they became available. The intersecting dimension of complexity (ID 6) limited the discretion of the participants as they attempted to balance the multiple adaptations. Those who thrived were able to exercise discretion in chosen tasks where it was determined to be a useful application of autonomy. The learning from this experience often gave them the confidence to be more self-assured in the future. Those surviving and languishing were reluctant to exercise discretion and took sanctuary in the apparent safety of the organisational framework. The intersecting dimension of propulsion (ID 7) meant that the participant group, while motivated and excited by the idea of the transition, were not necessarily confident about the exercise of discretion. Those thriving could identify the most judicious opportunities to exercise that control, whereas those surviving and languishing were less able to identify the appropriate moments or avail themselves of the opportunity to exercise discretionary decision-making power.

5.5.6 Complexity

This dimension referred to the nature of the demands associated with the challenge. The variety of social and task adjustments associated with the geographically dislocating transition meant that the participants were significantly challenged. The disorganisation and confusion that accompanied the dislocation was tempered by the participants' ability to balance the competing demands. Those who thrived were not 'undone' by the complexity of tasks and were able to move through the transition stages with a level of confidence. The intersecting dimension of facilitation (ID 8) demonstrated that the difficulties associated with complexity were mitigated by the identification and access to support systems; and the ability to make sense of the information that was obtained. The intersections of speed (ID 1) and amplitude (ID 2) are discussed above.

5.5.7 Propulsion

This dimension examined the motivating origins of the transition. For the participants in this study the desire to be part of the transition was a compelling factor. This self-propulsion included the motives and purposes associated with the transition and the geographical dislocation. The high levels of ego-involvement in electing to participate in the 'draft' required a qualification that the participant would go wherever they were sent. The expectation that the participant would be accepted and successful had the potential to undermine the transition. Those who thrived were able to commit and become meaningfully involved in the tasks of the transition from the beginning. Those who survived and languished were less willing to commit and reluctant to sever the connections to the old environment. Propulsion is a mixture of the self and the system, and the participants in this study entered the transition without a good understanding of what it might entail. The intersections of speed (ID 1), continuity (ID 4) and discretion (ID 5) are discussed above.

5.5.8 Facilitation

This dimension examined the support systems that were available and accessible to the participants as they negotiated the transition cycle. While formal induction programs were initiated, and support activities were delivered; their relevance for the individual varied considerably. Most of the valued information was sought from peers and had the effect of perpetuating the experiences and difficulties across the 'generations' of recruits to the clubs. Those who thrived were more able to discriminate between the resources that served them well, and the remainder. Those who were surviving or languishing attempted to respond to everything that was offered, both formal and informal. When they struggled with the requisite tasks they would often mimic others who appeared to be doing well, irrespective of the suitability of that strategy for their

own progress. The intersections of speed (ID 1), amplitude (ID 2), symmetry (ID 3) and discretion (ID 5) are discussed above.

5.5.9 Significance

This dimension was a function of the other dimensions with the particular emphasis that the career stage and developmental stage of the participants mediated the processes, infusing the transition with particular personal meaning. In this regard, the homogeneity of the participant group gave the study a significant opportunity to explore and identify the personal characteristics and processes of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation. While the transition was shared experience, the individual characteristics, processes and outcomes varied considerably. The high significance of the study transition provided the leverage to examine the categories that emerged. That some participants thrived survived or languished, made the study of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation possible.

5.6 The associated processes of the transition

These data and the associated transition characteristics and adjustment strategies gave insight into the underlying processes of negotiating the geographically dislocating transition. The underlying themes drawn from the initial coding provided the first set of process elements to support the final 16 concepts. These underlying themes were systematically reviewed and examined in regard to the informing data, to provide a significant set of process elements for the operation of thriving in periods of geographical dislocation.

The stages of the transition cycle (Nicholson, 1990) also provided the systematic framework for the range of experiences to be examined. Consequently, the processes of thriving in periods of geographically dislocating transitions was comprised of (a) identified process elements drawn from the data and supported

by the informing literature; and (b) an interpretive framework through which the processes could be observed.

These data described thriving in a more complex way, albeit in particular circumstances. Thriving was seen as a staged process rather than a static moment, and involved the resolution of issues at each stage. The 16 concepts and associated processes for the identified categories (i.e. thriving, surviving and languishing) appear in Table 5.4 below.

Data concepts	Processes of thriving	Processes of surviving	Processes of languishing
1. Readiness for the challenge	• Purposeful • Selective mastery	• Broadly aware • Visualisation difficulty	• Unaware • Lacking resources
2. Motivation	• Confident • Proactive	• Trouble with priorities • Confused by feedback	• Bewildered • Overwhelmed
3. Positive planning	• Self assured • Positively detached	• Guarded • Struggle with competing interests	• Fear of failing • Weighed down by expectations
4. Comprehensibility	• Forward focussed • Clear and ordered	• Unclear about tasks • Mimicking others	• Lacked understanding • Confused
5. Confidence	• Positive self concepts • Capacity to learn	• Searching for direction • Haphazard progress	• No frame of reference • Limited learning
6. Sense making	• Clarity of purpose • Commitment to the process	• Difficulty applying learning • Inundated	• Confused • Struggled for direction
7. Meaningfulness	• Conscious of transition components • Attach meaning to engagement	• Keen to please • Lacked insight	• Afraid to fail • Perplexed by the series of tasks
8. Engagement	• Linking with others • Accessing resources	• Wrestled with competing emotions • Self-conscious	• Afraid to let go • Tentative
9. Role development	• Awareness of transition • Connectedness	• Trouble selecting strategies • Keen to conform	• Resigned to external influences • Disconnected

Table 5.4 **Data concepts and processes for thriving, surviving and languishing in periods of geographic dislocation**

Data concepts	Processes of thriving	Processes of surviving	Processes of languishing
10. Manageability	• Responsive to challenge • Attentive to tasks	• Trouble seeing components • Using old skills	• Besieged • Instinctive
11. Support systems	• Identify support systems • Access support systems	• Unable to access support	• Unable to identify support
12. Personal development	• Identify transition pathways • Learn from the experience	• Lacking satisfaction • Unable to gather understanding from experience	• Stagnating • Disabled by criticism
13. Relationship building	• Independent • Capable of intimacy	• Unsure of lessons learned • Unsure of connections	• Disturbed by transitions • Reluctant to move from old to new
14. Environmental mastery	• Competent in new environment • Controls complex activities	• Lacked self-confidence • Unable to balance competing concerns	• Lacked strategies to cope • Remained as outsiders
15. Trust and commitment	• Willingness to be vulnerable • Receptive to future challenges	• Less assured • Hesitation to commit to the next phase	• Unable to discriminate between what did and didn't work • No vision for the future
16. Discretion	• Autonomous planning • Strategic insight	• Constrained • Longing for approval	• Dependent on structure • Requiring direction

Table 5.4 **Data concepts and processes for thriving, surviving and languishing in periods of geographic dislocation (cont.)**

5.7 The stages of the 'Thriving Transition Cycle'

The previous analysis provided an opportunity for a more detailed examination of the 16 concepts and associated processes for the identified category of thriving at each of the stages of the 'thriving transition cycle'.

5.7.3 Preparation

This first stage of the 'new' cycle was comprised of four concepts (see Table 5.5)

Data concepts	Processes of thriving
Readiness for the challenge	• Purposeful • Selective mastery
Motivation	• Confident • Proactive
Positive planning	• Self assured • Positively detached
Comprehensibility	• Forward focussed • Clear and ordered

Table 5.5 Stage One: data concepts and processes

Those thriving were purposeful in their anticipation of the transition and were able to select strategies:

> "When I was drafted I was always like a long-term prospect, like a skinny ruckman; ruckmen take longer to develop so I'm told. I kind of always thought time's on my side" (Participant 21).

This was consistent with the dislocation literature (e.g. Carter, 1999a; Elder jnr et al., 1996; Vernberg et al., 2006) where a brief disruption may be overcome when support systems and resources are identified and available. Thrivers were confident and proactive in regard to gathering information finding the necessary markers to navigate the transition:

> "...you've just got to try and put yourself out there as much as possible and talk to as many people around, like the club that you go to... or

where-ever you go to:... ummm to get to know everyone a lot better and not just stick to your one little group...and put yourself out there and that's the best way to make relationships with everyone and if you do that you're pretty right I reckon" (Participant 09).

The thrivers' ability to identify resources and respond appropriately (e.g. Taylor et al., 1984; VandeWalle et al., 2001; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997) contributed to the positive trajectory for those participants and allowed for them to learn from the experience. The thriving participants were self-assured:

"...but I knew I was not going to over-react and ...I don't really feel the pressure, I'm pretty relaxed in those sorts of things and I don't... don't get pressured" (Participant 03).

and positively detached:

"...just enjoy it...like that's the thing I've always found that I've just always wanted to do it" (Participant 05).

In this regard the thrivers were able to remain objective about the challenges and their capacity to cope. Those who thrived were also forward focussed and had a clear and ordered agenda for the future:

"...that's right...well it's still a cut-throat business and ahhh, you do what you can to help the team but you also...the bottom line is team success...you've got to make sure that your success in ensured as well" (Participant 01).

This positive planning augured well against the risks of homesickness (e.g. Fisher, 1990a; Stroebe et al., 2002; Thurber, 1999), and allowed the thrivers to be objective about the dislocating challenge and focus on the future. They were able to adapt to the new environment (Black & Ashford, 1995) and exercise

discretion in the areas where some autonomy was encouraged (e.g. Nicholson, 1987; Ryff & Singer, 2003).

The concepts at the Preparation stage, when well resolved, provided a platform for success as the transition continued; a breakdown of the participant clusters gave strength to these assumptions (see Appendix P (i) 'Stage 1'). The concept characteristics described the conditions and behaviours that defined a thriving trajectory; i.e. one that was forward focussed, clear and ordered, and purposeful; and where the participant was confident, pro-active and self-assured. They were positively detached from the emotions of the challenging task and used selective techniques to resolve their concerns. Their dominant adjustment strategy was exploratory (Nicholson, 1987) where there was simultaneous change in personal and role boundaries. Rather than regarding the challenge as fixed and inflexible, the thrivers were able to shape the new environment to their own needs and experience success through positive planning. This was supplemented by an absorption strategy (Nicholson, 1987) that recognised the limitations of role change and shifted the focus to individual learning and personal development.

Those who survived were only broadly aware of the tasks associated with the dislocating challenge. They experienced difficulty in visualising the journey and struggled to connect the immediate expectations with the organisational 'blueprint' for their future. They failed to thrive because they could not link the opportunities with their struggle for orderliness (Ryff & Singer, 2003). They experienced difficulties with priorities and were confused by the feedback they received, where they could not separate the information from the expectations (Fisher & Hood, 1988). Similarly they were unclear about the tasks required of them, struggled with the competing interests and resorted to inappropriate coping strategies to maintain some momentum (Meleis et al., 2000). Their dominant adjustment strategy was absorption (Nicholson, 1987) where the individual

acknowledged the rigidity of the role but worked towards the individual changes that allowed them to fit. There was some satisfaction from learning and personal development, but some participants became alienated through the loss of self. They supplemented this strategy with replication (Nicholson, 1987) by applying some of the skills and understandings from the time before the transition. While these were familiar, the participants were often frustrated by their inability to innovate. The trajectory for the survivors was unsteady and they moved to Stage 2 (Encounter) with a fragile scaffolding that was unlike to support a speedy transition (Nicholson, 1987).

Those who languished lacked awareness and could not readily identify or access the resources that might have supported them (Hobfoll, 1998). Their dominant adjustment strategy was replication (Nicholson, 1987), and they repeatedly applied the strategies of their previous environment to explain the new environment. While there was some comfort in being valued for the skills brought to the experience, they often felt trapped.

In some circumstances they were able to shift to an absorption strategy (Nicholson, 1987), but they were often bewildered and overwhelmed by the expectation placed upon them and were inclined to resign themselves to outcomes (e.g. Antonovsky, 1987; Nicholson, 1987) rather than exercise purposeful decision making. Their fear of failure took a toll on their confidence and their ability to describe a clear and focussed pathway (e.g. Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Porath & Bateman, 2006).

5.7.4 Encounter

This second stage of the 'new' cycle was comprised of four concepts (these are described in Table 5.6 below)

Data concepts	Processes of thriving
Confidence	• Positive self concepts • Capacity to learn
Sense making	• Clarity of purpose • Commitment to the process
Meaningfulness	• Conscious of transition components • Attach meaning to engagement
Engagement	• Linking with others • Accessing resources

Table 5.6 Stage Two: data concepts and processes

Those thriving at the 'encounter' stage had launched themselves from a successful preparation, and as a consequence were focussed and purposeful, confident and pro-active. Their 'encounter' experience was facilitated by this structured engagement and the trajectory for adjustment was positive. They now had clarity of purpose:

> "Well, yeah, comparing notes and just seeing what was happening... it was an easy transition to come down and be with some of my friends ummm, I had no problems... it didn't seem familiar because I hadn't done it before... obviously... but it was just about what I expected" (Participant 01).

They were committed to the process and conscious of the array of components that contributed to the transition experience:

> "...at the beginning... you didn't know if you were making mistakes, but that's how you learn, so you don't do it again" (Participant 03).

They had positive self-concepts and were ready to learn from the experience:

> "I know how to prepare and I think I know how to play a good game... I think I know my part in the team and I think I know what's required... and I know I can produce it...that gives me a lot of confidence" (Participant 05).

The behaviour of the thriving group involved timely accessing of resources and linking with others who could provide the support required to cope:

> "I'd been up here for, like, three months. I thought I was getting in the groove of it, you start playing and it is like totally different, and you've got to organise differently...once you really get out and learn to do things by yourself... not putting up with nothing, like, probably most of the year to work out, you know, how to do a lot of things" (Participant 21).

Similarly the thrivers could link with others to strengthen their position and provide a shared learning experience. Interestingly, the thrivers linked well with all participants but continued to use selective techniques to glean the more useful information from the experience:

> "I didn't - I don't think I needed a lot of guidance. I sort of - in a way you sort of sit back and watch what the players in the AFL are doing. My second year of footy is when I saw - your first year I just try and settle into the whole training, train every day, the lifestyle..." (Participant 20).

The dominant adjustment strategy continued as exploratory (Nicholson, 1987) and this provided the scaffolding for success as the transition continued; a breakdown of the participant clusters gave strength to these assumptions (see Appendix P (ii) 'Stage 2'). The confidence and sense-making at this stage were important as they gave clarity of purpose and fostered the capacity to learn (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Similarly the consciousness of the transition components (Antonovsky, 1987) and the timely accessing of resources (e.g. Hobfoll, 1998;

Ryff, 1989) augured well for the process of learning that permitted the participants to thrive (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995). The sense-making aspects of the challenge and meaningfulness were similar with the former being the ability to identify the salient components of the challenge (Antonovsky, 1987) and the latter being the process whereby the challenge was regarded as worthy of engagement (Hobfoll, 1998; Ickovics & Park, 1998; Moos & Schaefer, 1986; Ryff & Singer, 2003).

The concept characteristics described the conditions and behaviours that defined a positive thriving trajectory. The benefits and lessons learned at this stage provided the impetus for a uncomplicated passage to Stage 3 (Adjustment) of the transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987). It was also reflected in positive self-concepts and, importantly, the capacity to learn from the feedback received as the transition unfolded (VandeWalle et al., 2001). The thrivers readily linked with others, accessed the resources needed to cope with the challenges of the transition and attached referenced meaning to the strategies that they employ (e.g. Bianco, 2001; Oatley, 1990; Peel, 2000; Smider et al., 1996).

Conversely difficulties at Stage 1 (Preparation) manifested in difficulties at Stage 2 (Encounter) and an asymmetrical transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987).

Those surviving searched unclearly for direction and had a more haphazard approach to the tasks surrounding the encounter stage. Their dominant adjustment strategy was absorption (Nicholson, 1987) but they were keen to please (Porath & Bateman, 2006), and lacked the insight to engage meaningfully with the support systems (van Tilburg, 1997). Survivors were self-conscious and reluctant to disclose concerns (Bell & Bromnick, 1998) and this contributed to a lack of confidence and disconnectedness (e.g. Fisher, 1990b; Hormuth, 1984; Louis, 1980b).

Those languishing lacked a frame of reference for this stage of the transition and their trajectory was already compromised (Nicholson, 1987). Their dominant adjustment strategy was replication (Nicholson, 1987) and their fear of failing was pervasive (e.g. Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Porath & Bateman, 2006). Their ability to learn from the experience was predicated by their unwillingness to abandon the old environment and old strategies (Black & Ashford, 1995).

5.7.5 Adjustment

This third stage of the 'new' cycle was comprised of four concepts (these are described in Table 5.7 below)

Data concepts	Processes of thriving
Role development	• Awareness of transition • Connectedness
Manageability	• Responsive to challenge • Attentive to tasks
Support systems	• Identify support systems • Access support systems
Personal development	• Identify transition pathways • Learn from the experience

Table 5.7 Stage Three: data concepts and processes

Those thriving at the 'adjustment' stage continued to consolidate their position and as a consequence they were focussed, committed, confident and purposeful. Their 'adjustment' experience was strengthened by this clarity of purpose and attachment of meaning to the transition tasks and the trajectory for stability was positive. They were now able to demonstrate a vivid awareness of the transition tasks (e.g. Allen & Van de Vliert, 1984; Bridges, 2004; Fisher, 1997):

> "I'd been up here for, like three months. I thought I was getting in the groove of it... you've got to organise yourself differently" (Participant 21).
>
> "...it didn't seem familiar because I hadn't done it before...obviously...but it was kind of...it was just about what I expected" (Participant 01).

They identified the transition pathways and responded appropriately to the demands of the transition (Antonovsky, 1987; Moos & Holahan, 2003):

> "I suppose I've learned to be comfortable the way I've approach things... I think I've made that adjustment" (Participant 03).

> "...once you get up here you realise that everyone is on a pretty level playing field" (Participant 2).

They continued to learn from the experience (e.g. Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001; Meleis et al., 2000; O'Leary, 1998; Spreitzer et al., 2005):

> "Well, yeah, comparing notes and just seeing what was happening and ahhhh, it was just...it was an easy transition to come down and be with some of my friends ummm, I had no problem" (Participant 01).

> "Yeah, I suppose in your first year, you know, you've got another year next year to impress somebody and then you're in your second year and like, suppose I don't do anything this year, depending on how good the first year was, whatever, it could be the end of it" (Participant 21).

The thrivers were securely connected (Bianco, 2001; Dunkel-Schetter et al., 1987):

> "So I'd say you have to be prepared for things to be different. I was lucky to have the family I had...they were great...and I reckon it would've been a lot harder if I'd been living somewhere by myself or with someone, cooking and cleaning and..... Some of the players haven't been so lucky and I know it's been harder for them" (Participant 03).

> "...I'm pretty laid back... [It's] pretty easy to adjust in my surroundings, the moving [interstate], that wasn't really a worry" (Participant 21).

They identified the broader networks of emerging support and accessed them appropriately (e.g. Smider et al., 1996; Thurber & Weisz, 1997; Van Heck et al., 1997):

> "... like, being in a different State as well there's a lot of different things you have to adjust in... like, personal life as well... becomes a different ball game" (Participant 21).

> "...but I do really enjoy working with the younger guys and I've enjoyed doing it so far this year and there's a couple of guys coming through that, you know, I see good things for and I've been letting them know so...no it's good doing that." (Participant 05)

The concepts at the Adjustment stage, if well resolved, consolidated the trajectory for the thriving participants and the symmetry of the transition cycle continued. A breakdown of the participant clusters gave strength to these assumptions (see Appendix P (iii) 'Stage 3'). The dominant adjustment strategy continued to be exploratory (Nicholson, 1987) and their growth was evident as they managed the transition tasks and attended to the tasks. The personal development at this stage allowed an expansion of supplementary adjustment strategies, and the thrivers used absorption (Nicholson, 1987) to continue the required role learning; and began to exercise some determination (Nicholson, 1987) where the confidence developed in the transition process allowed them to exercise more discretion and to make choices about their transition pathways (e.g. selecting support, pacing the tasks):

> "I suppose I've learned to be comfortable the way I've approach things... I think I've made that adjustment" (Participant 03).

> "I'm used to the rigors of the AFL now and know exactly what's going on..." (Participant 01).

They were comfortable to be able to exercise some control and feel able to influence change. They strengthened the conditions and behaviours that defined thriving in a dislocating transition; i.e. one where they had acute awareness of the transition processes and pathways; they were responsive to the challenges they faced and continued to learn from the experience.

Conversely difficulties at Stage 2 (Encounter) manifested in difficulties at Stage 3 (Adjustment) and an asymmetrical transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987). Survivors experienced difficulty selecting strategies to take them forward and were inclined to conform to pathways of least resistance. They were keen to please and unlikely to exercise discretion that might involve criticism (Porath & Bateman, 2006). This lack of understanding hampered their help-seeking behaviour and they resorted to old strategies, or mimicked others to try and obtain some advantage (Anshel & Wells, 2000). The problems associated with the work and non-work interface were exacerbated by the relocation concerns (Noblet & Gifford, 2002), and difficulty in gathering understanding from the experience that might facilitate learning (Carver, 1998; Park, 1998). Their adjustment strategies moved from dominance in absorption to dominance in replication (Nicholson, 1987) when contrasts from previous experience remained unresolved resulting in feelings of alienation. Those who continued to apply the strategies that had not been successful during Stages 1 and 2 had limited options and felt trapped by the system. They were less able to learn from the experience and struggled for stability.

Those languishing struggled at this stage of the transition and their trajectory was substantially compromised (Nicholson, 1987). Their journey in the transition cycle had become acutely asymmetrical and they were disconnected and resigned to the direction given by the organisation (Bandura, 1997). Their only adjustment strategy was replication (Nicholson, 1987), but rather than confidently

applying the skills and understandings from the past, they were confused by the apparent lack of direction. They were disabled by criticism (Noblet & Gifford, 2002; VandeWalle et al., 2001) and behaved instinctively, rather than through understanding and learning what was required of them (Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2003).

5.7.6 Stability

This fourth stage of the 'new' cycle was comprised of four concepts (these are described in Table 5.8 below)

Data concepts	Processes of thriving
Relationship building	• Independent • Capable of intimacy
Environmental mastery	• Competent in new environment • Controls complex activities
Trust and commitment	• Willingness to be vulnerable • Receptive to future challenges
Discretion	• Autonomous planning • Strategic insight

Table 5.8 Stage Four: data concepts and processes

Those thriving at the 'stability' stage displayed the characteristics of a transition 'well resolved'. They were prepared for the demands of the organisational structure but behaved independently and with a degree of autonomy that reflected their understanding of the structural constraints in the new environment (Black & Ashford, 1995; West et al., 1987):

> "I think with a bit of time and you know, you start doing things well... you get a bit of feedback that you're doing okay, it gives you a lot of confidence" (Participant 05).

> "I've had to think more independently...make my own decisions. I mean I still ask my family and they're there ...there for me and, you know, there's

always the telephone and it's easy to call and talk to ...whoever is there" (Participant 03).

They demonstrated trust in the system and in those around them and did not feel threatened by exposure to new relationships (e.g. Clark & Payne, 1997; Connell et al., 2003; Mayer et al., 1995):

> "I feel happy with myself because I'm playing, but not get big-headed about it... [I] went and set some goals out and the first time I pretty much set goals, and so I sat down, had a chat with [the assistant coach] and asked him about what it was like his second year in the AFL system, after having a good first year" (Participant 09).

> "Well, you just have to adapt to the new expectations as best you can and it was easier... with six of us [the other draftees]... because we could have a laugh together and not worry about... making a fool of yourself... or embarrassing yourself by asking a senior player a stupid question" (Participant 03).

The thrivers could control complex activities with strategic insight (e.g. Anshel & Wells, 2000; Hobfoll et al., 2002; Ryff, 1989):

> "Yeah, it's like my life had just started over and it's like I've moved to a new town and found new friends and everything's fine" (Participant 01).

> "... at the beginning when you didn't know if you were making mistakes [but] now...it's pretty clear what needs to be done and it's still hard... but there are clear things to do" (Participant 03).

They were receptive to future changes that marked their mastery of the current transition cycle and their readiness for the next (Nicholson, 1987; Ryff & Singer, 2003; Schlossberg, 1989):

"Still trying to work out what I'd be best suited to actually... so ummm, yeah, I do think a fair bit about life after footy" (Participant 05).

"I watch and think about what it takes to step up" (Participant 03).

The concepts at the Stability stage, well resolved, completed one rotation of the transition cycle and established the foundations for the next one. The symmetry of the cycle for thriving participants and the consistency of the participant clusters gave strength to these assumptions (see Appendix P (iv) 'Stage 4'). The concept characteristics consolidated the conditions and behaviours that defined thriving in a dislocating transition; i.e. one where they are independent and autonomous planners; they have mastery over the new environment and can manage complex activities. They are open and willingly engage in all aspects of the challenging environment. The adjustment strategies expanded to a suite of three, exploration, absorption and determination (Nicholson, 1987). They could selectively adjust to meet the demands of the transition or exercise discretion and environmental mastery to shape the transition task to suit their skill set. They continued to learn and were receptive to the likelihood of change in the future.

Conversely difficulties at Stage 3 (Adjustment) interfered with the movement towards Stage 4 (Stability) and the asymmetrical transition cycle was exacerbated (Nicholson, 1987). Survivors became trapped in the tasks at Stages 2 (Encounter) and 3 (Adjustment) with little advancement. The consequential instability made it difficult for them to resolve the tasks with any confidence. This was particularly felt in the area of learning, which marked the thrivers as adept. Their adjustment strategies were confined to replication of the past (Nicholson, 1987) and they were unsure of the lessons learned, unsure of the connections,

and lacked the self-confidence to commit to the next phase (e.g. Bergland & Kirkevold, 2001; Carver, 1998; Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Those languishing were disturbed by the transitions and lacked the strategies to cope (Fisher, 1990d; Lee, 1990; Thurber & Weisz, 1997). Their journey in the transition cycle had become deeply asymmetrical and the chances of reaching a level of stability were remote. Their adjustment strategy was limited to replication and they remained as 'outsiders' and were unable to discriminate between what did and didn't work (Nicholson, 1987). They failed to thrive and their prospects for recovery were limited (e.g. Carver, 1998; O'Leary, 1998; Porath & Bateman, 2006; Spreitzer et al., 2005).

5.8 Summary

This study examined the characteristics and processes of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation. It found that the circumstances surrounding the geographic dislocation were significantly challenging. The dislocation disrupted routines, resulted in a loss of social networks, and a perceived loss of environmental mastery. It was consistent with the dislocation literature (e.g. Forster, 1990; Munton & West, 1995; Vernberg & Field, 1990) where the impact of the dislocation was the onset of psychological uncertainty and the need to re-assess the self (Selder, 1989). The participant group was examined to establish the nature of the group; and they were found to be a remarkably homogenous group of young men across a broad range of factors. The participant group had all embraced the dislocating challenge as a requirement of their sporting contract. Despite the similarity of the participants in the study, and the consistent character of the challenge, the outcomes for the participants were different.

The participant group was examined through semi-structured interviews to identify the characteristics (concepts) of thriving in periods of geographic

dislocation. Sixteen concepts were identified and these, together with the underlying themes, provided a robust description of the characteristics of the transition experience. Three categories were evident in the data; participants who thrived, participants who survived, and participants who languished as a result of negotiating the dislocating challenge. These categories provided a more focussed and detailed description of thriving in periods of geographical dislocation. The outcome differences initially observed in the participant group were consistent in the categories across all of the identified concepts.

The transition concepts and categories were examined as a staged process using the transition cycle, a conceptual framework for the analysis of change and human resources management (Nicholson, 1987). This enabled the identification and description of the transition processes, and a new conception of the dynamic processes for those that thrive in periods of geographic dislocation. The outcome differences initially observed in the participant group and later in the patterns observed in the categories in the 16 concepts were consistent across the stages of the transition. The trajectories for the participants thriving, surviving and languishing were explained by the processes attached to the resolution of tasks at each stage of the transition.

The participants described in this study allowed a refinement of the concept of thriving in the context of a geographic dislocating challenge. In addition, thriving was ascribed to the transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987); and the concepts and processes were described and discussed at each of the four stages.

This study contributed to an expansion of Nicholson's (1987) model of a transition cycle by examining the particular characteristics of thriving in periods of geographical dislocation. It identified the 16 concepts that provide a profile of an individual negotiating a geographically dislocating challenge, and particularly

those who thrived in the new environment. This study identified the associated processes of thriving in each of the concepts, at each stage of the transition. It identified the dynamic nature of these processes and the trajectories of participants as they negotiated the transition.

This study also described the process of thriving in a geographically dislocating context in regard to time. This temporal examination indicated both a timeframe for the passage through the transition cycle, and also a trajectory for thriving. In that regard, those that are able to resolve the identified transition tasks at the staging points are on a trajectory for thriving. Whereas those whose tasks are poorly resolved or unresolved, are less able to thrive as the transition unfolds.

The action of thriving in a geographically dislocating transition was explored using the nine dimensions of the transition cycle. This taxonomic exploration provided a clear indication of the resolution of the identified concept tasks at each of the stages, and the identification of the discriminating categories of thriving, surviving and languishing.

For each of the identified categories (i.e. thriving, surviving and languishing) the concepts were the same; however the resolution of the associated tasks was more problematic. The recursive process of learning linked with thriving gives those participants a significant advantage, and, while not the direct subject of this study, the opportunities for intervention are evident.

Chapter 6

Summary and recommendations

6.0 The research question

The aim of this study was to identify the personal characteristics and processes of young men who thrive in periods of geographic dislocation.

Geographically dislocating transitions were regarded as potentially disruptive and disconnecting, with a high risk for poor health outcomes (Brim Jnr & Ryff, 1980; Hormuth, 1984; Pearlin, 1980; Schlossberg, 1984). Nevertheless the potential for growth, learning and development (i.e. thriving) was also a possible consideration (Carver, 1998; Ickovics & Park, 1998; Spreitzer et al., 2005).

This study provided a new understanding of thriving and what it means to thrive in the challenging context of a move away from a familiar environment to an unfamiliar environment. The study provided a new definition of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation; and a new understanding of the characteristics and processes involved in that transition. It provided a new concept of thriving as a staged cyclic process and adapted the Nicholson (1987) Transition Cycle to present a Thriving Transition Cycle in the context of geographically dislocating challenge.

6.1 Summary of the research process

The research process involved the development of a mixed method research design and conceptual framework that guided the literature review and the data analysis.

The contributing literature provided a summary of the current knowledge on geographically dislocating transitions. The diverse literature indicated distress on a number of levels; from homesickness (e.g. Fisher & Hood, 1987; Stroebe et al.,

2002; Thurber, 1999), to anxiety (e.g. Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Moos, 1986; Vernberg & Field, 1990) and depression (e.g. Aldwin & Revenson, 1987; Moos & Holahan, 2003). Research also indicated that the environment of elite sport accentuates the levels of pressure that might ordinarily be attached to the challenge of dislocation (Anshel & Delany, 2001; Baillie & Danish, 1992; Noblet & Gifford, 2002; Russell, 2000; Stephan et al., 2003; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1998).

The literature also described the personal characteristics that informed the general capacity to thrive. Thriving in these circumstances involved a process whereby the individual could identify the individual and social resources to manage the challenging circumstances (O'Leary, 1998). The consequence is learning, growth and enhanced well-being (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995; Park, 1998; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

The complementary and informing construct of goal orientation in challenging circumstances (Dweck, 1986; Zimmerman, 2001) provided an extension of an understanding of thriving where the three-dimensional model mirrored the emerging categories in the current study, i.e. (i) learning (achievement and skill development, or thriving), (ii) performance-prove (achievement and acknowledgement, or surviving), and (iii) performance-avoid (achievement and threat aversion, or languishing) (Porath & Bateman, 2006; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997; Whinghter et al., 2008). The link to the thriving literature is most apparent where individuals learn from the challenging circumstance and "...feel progress and momentum, marked by a sense of learning (greater understanding and knowledge) and a sense of vitality (aliveness)" (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 537)

The use of the transition cycle (1987) provided a scaffolding for exploring the transition process. Nicholson's (1984; 1987; 1990) model is a complex,

comprehensive cycle of transition in four stages – preparation, encounter, adjustment and stabilisation. The tasks at the stages are generally described and include the caveat that the process is (a) recursive, (b) disjunctive, and (c) interdependent. The transition cycle provided a facilitative framework to explore and describe the particular characteristics of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation.

Using purposeful selection a group of 24 elite sportsmen, for whom geographic dislocation was a consequence of their employment contract, were identified. The selection of this group of young men was designed to provide a cohort of comparable individuals, experiencing a similar transition; rather than to imply characteristics specific to the gender or age-group. As an exploratory study, two clubs were selected in different States to provide a mix of environments, while still fulfilling the key requirement that participants were engaged with a club which was geographically dislocated from their home context. While the move was one that was desirable (Nicholson, 1984), the nature and destination of the new environment was not known. For all these participants, the geographic dislocation was a challenging task, the extent of which was captured by the Geographic Dislocation Scale (developed by the researcher for this study). External indicators (i.e. Australian Football League statistics) described a particularly poor success rate (e.g. time at the club; games played) for dislocated players and this had been an ongoing concern for recruitment (Roos, 2007). A set of valid and reliable instruments were used to determine the nature of the participant group.

6.2 Summary of research findings

While Nicholson (1987) had described the transition cycle in considerable detail, the characteristics of a particular transition were not expanded; nor were the categories of relative success (thriving, surviving and languishing) described.

In this study, the factors that might have accounted for a capacity to thrive were identified from the literature and include general personality (i.e. extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness and conscientiousness), psychological well-being (i.e. autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance), and personal orientation (i.e. comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness) in dealing with challenging circumstances. The participant group were remarkably homogenous on all aspects of the testing instruments. Their variability in success was not explained by the information contained in these broad testing regimes.

Data collected from detailed semi-structured interviews were used to explore and describe the characteristics and processes of thriving. The interview data were analysed through the iterative construction of themes, and subsequently into over-arching concepts. The final 16 concepts provided a rich set of characteristics, reflective of the experience of a geographically dislocating transition. The final 16 concepts were (1) gaining confidence; (2) readiness for the challenge; (3) sense-making; (4) support systems; (5) role development; (6) motivation; (7) positive planning; (8) comprehensibility; (9) manageability; (10) meaningfulness; (11) discretion; (12) environmental mastery; (13) personal development; (14) relationship building; (15) engagement; and (16) trust and commitment.

Within those concepts the 3 categories of thriving, surviving and languishing were apparent and the discriminating characteristics identified. These categories provided a more focussed and detailed description of thriving in periods of geographical dislocation. The concepts (and their embedded categories) were then ascribed to the stages of the transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987), providing an original contribution to the understanding of the characteristics and processes of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation. The passage of time to each stage

`was also examined and this was observed to be a reflection of the stages well resolved, and the learning applied to the new challenges. This insight provided further evidence of the processes involved in thriving where the resolution of tasks provides the impetus to move forward more quickly and the applied learning facilitates the transition cycle.

The concepts provided the substance for a description of the characteristics of the personal characteristics of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation. The thriving participants were able to action these by the processes of:

- Purposeful and selective mastery (readiness for the challenge);
- Confident and proactive activity (motivation);
- Being self assured and positively detached (positive planning);
- A clear and ordered, forward focus (comprehensibility);
- Positive self-concepts and a willingness to learn (confidence);
- Clarity of purposé and a commitment to process (sense-making);
- Awareness of the transition process and engagement (meaningfulness);
- Linking with others and accessing resources (engagement);
- Awareness of the transition and challenges (role development);
- Responsiveness and attentiveness (manageability);
- Identification and access to support systems (support systems);
- Identification of pathways and learning from experience (personal development);
- Demonstrating independence and sociability (relationship building);
- Mastering new and complex skills (environmental mastery);
- Willingness to be open and receptive to future challenges (trust and commitment);
- Autonomous planning and strategic insight (discretion).

The ascription of these concepts to the stages of the transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987) gave a new insight into the process of thriving and leant support to Nicholson's description of the transition cycle as (a) recursive, (b) disjunctive, and (c) interdependent. This was reinforced by an examination of the nine dimensions of the dislocating transition using Nicholson's (1990) taxonomic model. The process of thriving was observed as a staged process, independently travelled, where the trajectories of passage exerted a significant influence on the outcomes, i.e. the thrivers continued to thrive, those languishing found it difficult to recover, and the survivors were drawn in both directions.

6.3 Representations from the research

Where previous research into thriving (e.g. Carver, 1998; O'Leary, 1998; Park, 1998; Spreitzer et al., 2005) identified the "...progress and momentum, marked both by a sense of learning (greater understanding and knowledge) and a sense of vitality (aliveness)" (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 537), this research contributed to a clearer understanding of thriving through (a) the detailed description of the personal characteristics that allow an individual to thrive, and (b) a new understanding of the staged progression of the thriving as a cyclic process.

Further, the context of the study provided a deeper understanding of the particular challenge of geographic dislocation. While the elements of thriving are deliberately more generally described, they were generated through a contextual study and care must be taken not to assume that they will hold true in other challenging circumstances. The broad transition framework allowed the ascription of the characteristics of thriving to the stages of the cycle (Nicholson, 1987) and to assert these as a tentative explanation for the cyclic process of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation.

Consequently, this research provided a new, comprehensive definition of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation. It described the salient characteristics drawn from the analysis of the research data, and supported the conceptual framework from the contributing literature. It captured the themes that were persistent and applied them to a staged process, with trajectories through the stages that contributed to an understanding of thriving as an incremental process.

In that context, individuals who thrived:

- Were self confident, purposeful and pro-active;
- Had a clear and ordered future focus;
- Were acutely aware of the challenge and attached meaning to engagement;
- Responded positively and confidently to tasks;
- Were positively detached and applied learning with strategic insight; and
- Were connected and committed to their support systems.

There was agreement with the literature in regard to the essential characteristics of thriving, particularly that thriving occurs in response to a challenge rather than a threat (Carver, 1998). Further it involves gain through learning, rather than the minimisation of loss (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995), and a consequent enhanced capacity for recovery, growth, understanding and motivation (Carver, 1998; Carver & Scheier, 1999; O'Leary, 1998; Park, 1998; Spreitzer et al., 2005).

This research extended that understanding to a more detailed description of the salient characteristics, and the processes that gave the impetus to individuals to thrive, rather than survive or languish. In that regard, an individual who thrived in a period of geographic dislocation demonstrated readiness for the challenge through purposeful and selective mastery of the new environment. They were

confident, proactive and planned carefully. As they engaged with the tasks of the challenge, they were self assured and positively detached; they found the tasks of the challenge comprehensible and had a clear and ordered, forward focus. This was consistent with, and extended the literature that described thriving as a process of adaptive self-regulation (Tsui & Ashford, 1994) and as a transformative cognitive adjustment (O'Leary, 1998).

As they progressed, the individuals who thrived developed positive self concepts, confidence and actively linked with support systems. They had clarity of purpose, a commitment to the process of engagement with the challenging circumstances, and attached meaning to the course of action. In this progression there was an increased willingness and capacity to learn from the experience and to apply the learning to the tasks of negotiating the unfolding challenge. This was consistent with and extended the literature that described thriving as a subjective experience (Spreitzer et al., 2005); where there was growth through learning and self-reliance (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995), and growth in skills and knowledge (Carver, 1998).

Onward progression of thriving was characterised by an increased awareness of the transition process and connectedness with the new environment. Those that thrived were responsive to the challenge and attentive to the tasks; they effectively employ the support systems and continued to build upon the learning that has taken place. This enhanced learning and growth allowed them to more readily identify the transition pathways and engage with confidence. This was consistent with and extended the literature that described thriving as linked to growth and the improved use of social resources (O'Leary, 1998; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995; Park, 1998).

The accomplished thriver had mastery of the new environment and controlled complex activities. They planned autonomously and had strategic insight into the resolution of the challenge. They were independent, confidently open and receptive to the future challenges for which they prepared. This was consistent with and extended the literature that described thriving as involving trust, respect and increased discretion in decision making (Spreitzer et al., 2005), and openness and awareness of vulnerability (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

A revised model described the attributes of the thriving individual as a component of the staged process, as described in Figure 6.1

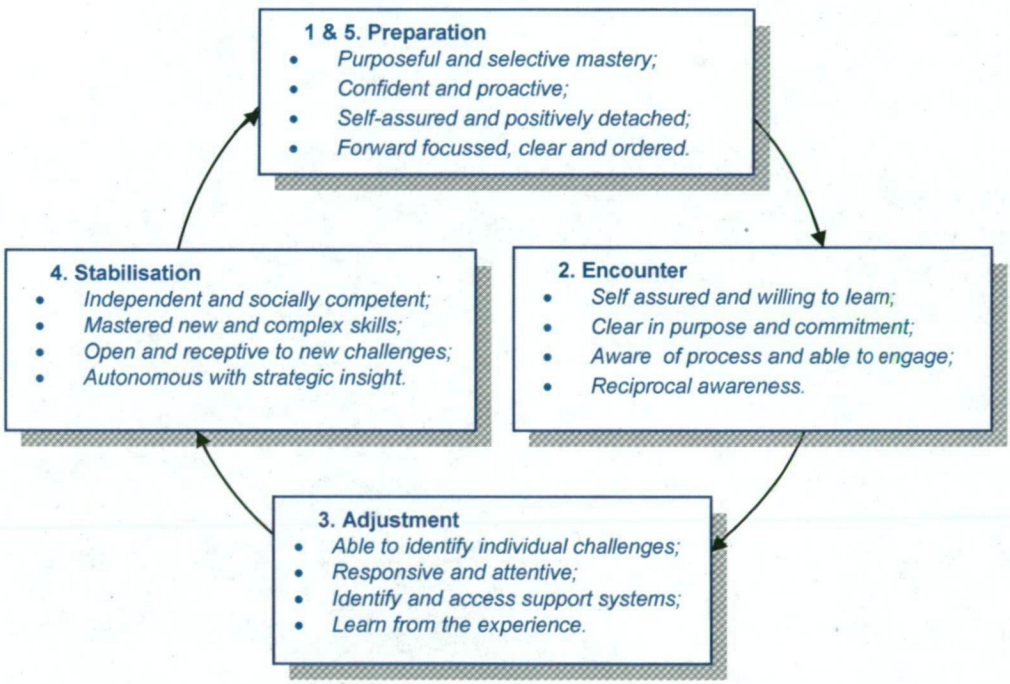

Figure 6.1 **The Thriving Concept Characteristics (adapted from Nicholson, 1987)**

6.4 Reflections on the research

We are all in transition, moving from one stage of existence to the next. We apply a frame of reference to explore, understand and negotiate the

accompanying challenges. Some challenges are more confronting than others and threaten well-being, and yet some individuals thrive. They have a confident awareness; they make meaning from the challenge; they learn from the process; and apply the learning to increase understanding.

Where resilience has been described as circumstances where protection occurs, not through the avoidance of risk, but by successfully engaging in it; thriving promotes the possibility of doing well because of, rather than in spite of, the challenging circumstances. Thriving is transformative, and the meta-cognitive change that occurs allowed the individual to examine their sense of self, i.e. the challenge is sufficiently confronting to be a cause for change. This study extended that concept where the 'heat' of the challenge became the catalyst for change where three outcomes were possible:

Thriving: improved awareness, learning and growth;

Surviving: recovery to a semblance of original levels, or resilience;

Languishing: unable to action the possibilities.

This process of thriving indicated exciting possibilities in regard to the future design of positive adaptations and timely interventions. In this study, the staged ascription of thriving characteristics to a transition cycle (Nicholson, 1987) provided a new position of strategic understanding of thriving as a cyclic process.

When the differential adaptations are linked to the cyclic components of the model, the selected characteristics can be identified, see Figure 6.2 below.

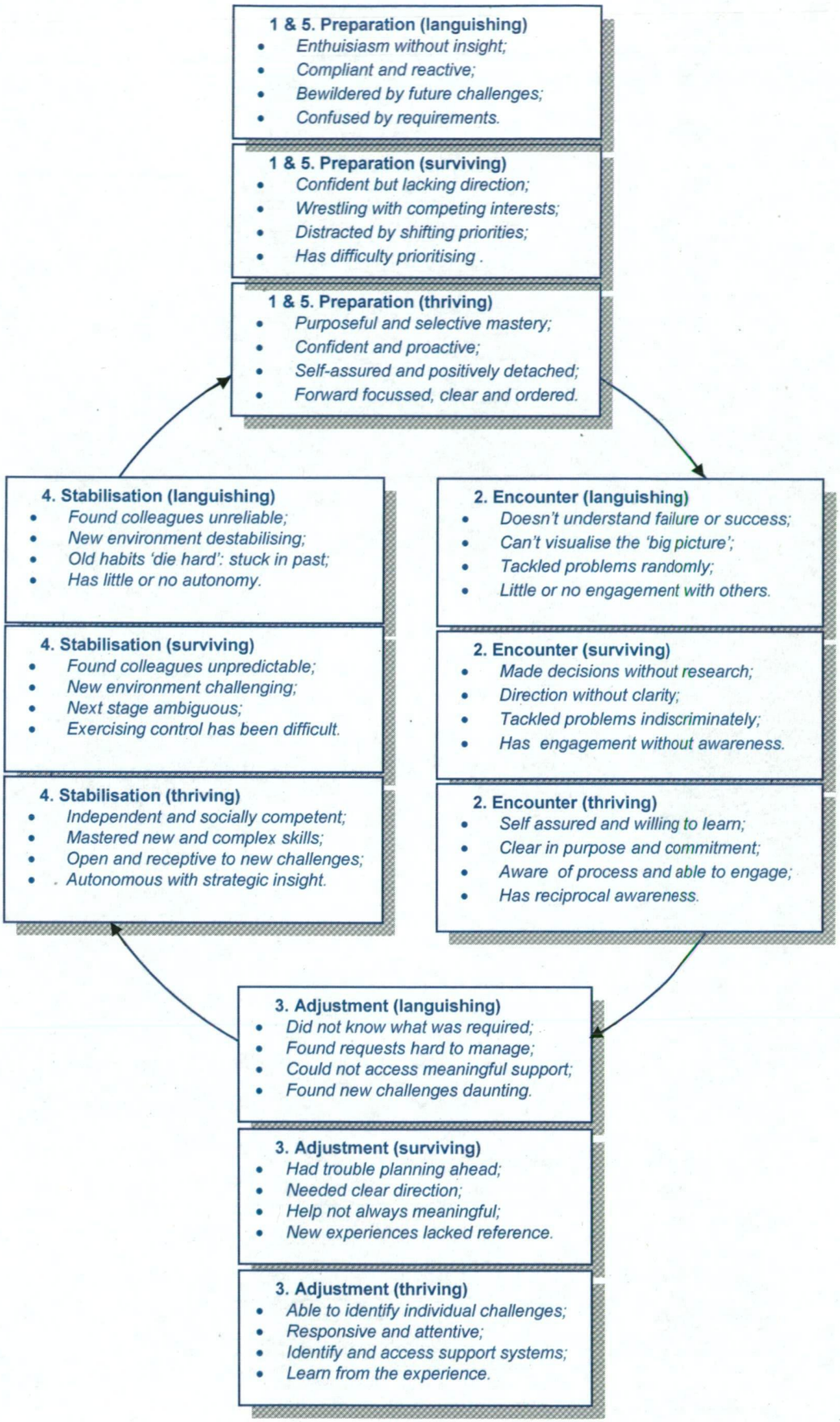

Figure 6.2 **The Transition Cycle: concept characteristics by types of adaptation (adapted from Nicholson, 1987)**

The features of this study, with its combination of a cyclic model and the identification of the differential types of adaptation to the transition process, provide a significant development from previous work. The transition cycle (Nicholson 1987, 1990) has been adapted to explain the selected characteristics and processes of a particular transition, i.e. the challenging circumstances accompanying a geographic dislocation. However in addition to this, the study has identified three clear categories of adaptation based on the data (i.e. thriving, surviving and languishing), including the individual patterns of adjustment and transition trajectories. A further feature of this new model was a discussion of the taxonomy of the transition from the new perspective of the 'thriving' transition cycle. This study also related the adaptation categories (i.e. thriving, surviving and languishing) to the complex intersections of previously identified aspects of speed, amplitude, symmetry, continuity, discretion, complexity, propulsion, facilitation, and significance. This would provide a range of directions for the development of strategic interventions in future studies.

6.5 Limitations of the study

The research focussed on a small, homogenous group of young, elite male athletes, and while this allowed the research to inquire deeply into the nature and process of thriving, it is not immediately generalisable. The focus on the group of young men was a strategy designed to provide a cohort of comparable individuals experiencing a similar transition; rather than to imply characteristics specific to the gender or age-group.

The research was also exploratory and relied upon the recollections of the experience. The timeframes involved were compressed by the availability of the participants working around their contractual obligations but this did not impact on the research design.

The study was limited to two clubs to provide an appropriate sample. However the two clubs selected were in different states which provided the opportunity to sample the geographical dislocation in different environments.

The study was designed to provide an understanding of the characteristics and processes of thriving in periods of geographical dislocation. As such it was an exploratory study which relied, in part, on collecting data based on the participants' direct experience.

The choice of a mixed methods approach was made in order to combine the possibility of examining quantitatively based information and qualitative based information. Combining both methodologies allowed a more detailed exploration of the experience of thriving than had previously been described in the literature.

The study focussed on the adaptation of one model of transition (i.e. Nicholson 1987, 1990) for the purposes of providing a substantial base from which to examine thriving in transition. While it is recognised that there are other models of transition (e.g. Bridges 2004, Selder 1989, Schlossberg 1989), the Nicholson (1987, 1990) model provided the most appropriate framework for this study.

6.6 Future research

Thriving is a dynamic process of positive adaptation. The emerging understanding of thriving draws from a number of contributing constructs (e.g. resilience, and psychological well-being). The researcher has described thriving as a suite of personal characteristics and resources, together with a staged process that facilitates the trajectory of thriving through learning, awareness and confidence. It will be important to better understand the nature of the resources being accessed and how these have assisted the process, e.g. do the resources encourage learning through enhanced confidence or vice versa?

Measures of thriving still require more attention, as outcomes that appear to be measureable might not provide evidence for the process of thriving. Subjective and objective measures of thriving will provide evidence for a better understanding of the character and process of thriving.

To advance the learnings from this research and to contribute to the design of possible interventions, the direction of future research should employ the methodology to other groups, and to a wider range of transition challenges. A longitudinal, prospective study could establish a baseline of functioning before a challenging event, and then observe the duration of the impact of the challenge, the pathways to recovery and adaptation that might be described as thriving. The characteristic (behavioural and psychological) responses could be observed and monitored to indicate the relative contribution to an improved outcome. These understandings could more accurately inform possible interventions, especially where challenging events are predictable and which allow researchers to discriminate in regard to attributable contributions. This might be usefully explored as part of an investigation into the stages of thriving as suggested in this study. Thriving as a staged process is a realistic assumption and the opportunities for the design of interventions/skill enhancement to complement the process and trajectory of thriving seems logical.

While this study was constructed around the challenge of geographic dislocation, the skills and competencies may be more universal. While no attempt has been made to generalise from these findings, the opportunities for further, similar research might include:

- Other participant groups (e.g. gender and age variables), to explore whether these characteristics and processes of thriving in periods of geographic dislocation hold true;

- A replication of this study with a larger cross-section of the AFL clubs;
- A replication of this study with other groups for whom geographic dislocation has been a destabilising challenge;
- A study where the focus is on a particular stage of the transition cycle to search for trajectory points;
- The design of intervention programs, to examine the trajectories towards thriving that might be enhanced;
- Other challenging circumstances to check the identified characteristics for transference and relevance:
- Research that explores the independence of the three categories through a factor analytic process, in order to move the research from the highly informative qualitative approach to a statistically oriented examination.

Intervention programs that may evolve from this current exploration of thriving might be located at the staging points. The recursive, disjunctive and interdependent nature of transitions (Nicholson, 1984, 1987), means that an intervention to enhance a salient characteristic of thriving at Stage 1, ought to be observed in that stage and the stages beyond; e.g. proactive programs to enhance comprehensibility and positive planning should increase confidence and sense making. These enhancements/interventions could be designed for particular individuals at particular stages with minimal risk, but with much potential gain.

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Appendices

Appendix A

The participant team's Australian Football League (AFL) player statistics:

	Team A	*Geographically Dislocated*	Team B	*Geographically Dislocated*	Total
Team list totals	257	*155*	299	*194*	
Never Played	43 (16.7%)	*31*	55 (18.4%)	*39*	98 (17.6%)
1 – 9	65 (25.3%)	*45*	78 (26%)	*54*	143 (25.7%)
10 – 24	34 (13.2%)	*21*	52 (17.4%)	*32*	86 (15.5%)
25 – 49	42 (16.3%)	*24*	49 (16.4%)	*31*	91 (16.4%)
Total under 50	**184 (71.5%)**	***121 (65.7% of sub-total)***	**234 (78.2%)**	***156 (66.6%of sub-total)***	**418 (75.2%)**
50 – 74	27 (10.5%)	*13*	24 (8.0%)	*13*	51 (9.2%)
75 – 99	15 (5.8%)	*11*	11 (3.7%)	*7*	26 (4.7%)
Total under 100	**226 (87.8%)**	***145 (64.2% of sub-total***	**269 (89.9%)**	***176 (65.4% of sub-total)***	**495 (89.1%)**
100 – 124	10 (3.9%)	*5*	8 (2.7%)	*5*	18 (3.2%)
125 – 149	4 (1.6%)	*2*	5 (1.7%)	*3*	9 (1.6%)
150 – 174	3 (1.1%)	*1*	8 (2.7%)	*5*	11 (2.0%)
175 – 199	4 (1.6%)	*1*	4 (1.3%)	*3*	8 (1.4%)
200 – 224	1 (0.4%)	*0*	5 (1.7%)	*2*	6 (1.1%)
225 – 249	4 (1.6%)	*1*	0 (0.0%)	*0*	4 (0.7%)
250 – 274	1 (0.4%)	*0*	0 (0.0%)	*0*	1 (0.2%)
275 – 299	0 (0.0%)	*0*	0 (0.0%)	*0*	0 (0.0%)
300 +	4 (1.6%)	*0*	0 (0.0%)	*0*	4 (0.7%)
Totals	**257 (100%)**		**299 (100%)**		**556 (100%)**

Player Statistics - games played 1986 – 2007 (http://stats.rleague.com/afl/stats/stats_idx.html)

	Team A	*Geographically dislocated*	Team B	*Geographically dislocated*	Total
Squad members	**257**	***155***	**299**	***194***	
Never played	43 (16.7%)	*31*	55 (18.4%)	*39*	98 (17.6%)
Played 1 year	56 (21.8%)	*41*	78 (26.1%)	*59*	134 (24.1%)
Played 2 years	30 (11.7%)	*22*	66 (22.1%)	*47*	96 (17.3%)
Played 3 years	46 (17.9%)	*29*	23 (7.7%)	*14*	69 (12.4%)
Played 3 years or less	**175 (68.1%)**	***123 (70.3% of sub-total***	**222 (74.3%)**	***159 (71.6% of sub-total)***	**397 (71.4%)**
Played 4 years or more	82 (31.9%)	*32*	77 (25.7%)	*35*	159 (28.6%)
	257 (100%)		**299 (100%)**		**556 (100%)**

Player Statistics – time at club 1986 – 2007 (http://stats.rleague.com/afl/stats/stats_idx.html)

Appendix B

Private Bag 01 Hobart
Tasmania 7001 Australia
Telephone (03) 6226 2764
Facsimile (03) 6226 7148
Marilyn.Knott@utas.edu.au
http://www.research.utas.edu.au//index.htm

MEMORANDUM

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (TASMANIA) NETWORK

UTAS

FULL COMMITTEE ETHICS APPLICATION APPROVAL

17 February 2004

Professor Judi Walker
North West Rural Clinical School
Locked Bag 3513
Launceston

Ethics reference: H7674

'Resilience in transition: The personal characteristics of resilience that are sustaining and protective in the absence of contextual support characteristics'.

PhD candidate: Martin Harris

Dear Professor Walker

The Northern Tasmania Social Sciences Ethics Committee approved the above project on the 12th of February 2004.

All committees operating under the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network are registered and required to comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (NHMRC 2007).

Therefore, the Chief Investigator's responsibility is to ensure that:

1) All researchers listed on the application comply with HREC approved application.
2) Modifications to the application do not proceed until approval is obtained in writing from the HREC.
3) The confidentiality and anonymity of all research subjects is maintained at all times, except as required by law.
4) Statement 5.5.3 of the National Statement states:

   Researchers have a significant responsibility in monitoring approved research as they are in the best position to observe any adverse events or unexpected outcomes. They should report such events or outcomes promptly to the relevant institution/s and ethical review body/ies and take prompt steps to deal with any unexpected risks.

5) All participants must be provided with the current Information Sheet and Consent form as approved by the Ethics Committee.

6) The Committee is notified if any investigators are added to, or cease involvement with, the project.

7) This study has approval for 4 years contingent upon annual review. A *Progress Report* is to be provided on the anniversary date of your approval. You will be sent a courtesy reminder closer to this due date.

8) A *Final Report* and a copy of the published material, either in full or abstract, must be provided at the end of project.

Yours sincerely

M. Knott

Ethics Executive Officer

for

Appendix C

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania
Locked Bag 1372, Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone: 03 6324 4000
Fax: 03 6324 4040
Email: rural.health@utas.edu.au

Visit our Website at: www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au

Information Sheet

The Project

Resilience in transition: the personal characteristics of resilience in young males that are sustaining and protective in the absence of contextual support characteristics.

Investigators

Professor Judi Walker, Professor of Rural Health (Co-Supervisor)

Dr. Marion Myhill, Senior Lecturer, University Department of Education (Co-Supervisor)

Mr. Martin Harris, University Department of Rural Health (Researcher)

Procedures

We are gathering information to explore and contribute to the understanding of the mental health implications of geographic dislocation, the mechanisms of personal resilience, and the pathways for intervention.

The Australian Football League (AFL) provides a distinctive group of highly motivated individuals for whom personal resilience is a key component of their playing potential. For many players, the move to an AFL club requires geographic dislocation from support networks and familiar routines. These players are required to adapt to the new surroundings and still perform at the highest levels.

The research design will study the specific event sequences of joining an AFL team, the assessment of well-being, the stressing challenges encountered and the characteristic responses. This information will help the design of support programs to strengthen resilience, and the design of specific interventions designed to meet the needs of individual players.

We are asking participants to be involved in the collection of information on their perceptions of resilience and wellness over a three year period, particularly in regard to response to geographic dislocation.

The research will involve two specific areas:

1. In-depth interviews with participants.
2. The completion of instruments as a baseline for the investigation.

We do not perceive any risks associated with participation in the research activity. If during the course of the research study you report emotional distress or anxiety, it is important that you feel free to withdraw from the activity. We will be reinforcing self-care principles and all participants will be encouraged to access appropriate counselling support. The St. Kilda Football Club is aware of the information gathering activity and, if required, can be contacted through the player development manager, Mr. Brian Phelan.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved at all times. This project will adhere to the University of Tasmania's strict constraints on the form and circumstance of data release. Transcripts from the structured interviews and the education module will not identify any of the contributors.

Participation is entirely voluntary and contributors can withdraw at any time without prejudice. Debriefing for participants who withdraw and counselling support and referral services will also be made available.

All participants will receive feedback about the overall conclusions drawn from the data collection and will be given an opportunity to comment on the education module that is developed with their input.

Participants will be given copies of the information sheet and statement of informed consent to keep.

This project has received ethical approval from the University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Contact persons

Further information about the project please contact Martin Harris, Researcher, UDRH,
(03 6324 4029) or by email at Martin.Harris@utas.edu.au

If you have any concerns or complaints about the manner in which the project is conducted you may contact the Chair or Executive Officer of the Northern Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee.

Chair:	**Professor Roger Fay**	**(6324 3576)**
Executive Officer:	**Amanda McAully**	**(6226 2763)**

Thank you very much for your interest in this important project.

Appendix D

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania
Locked Bag 1372, Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone: 03 6324 4000
Fax: 03 6324 4040
Email: rural.health@utas.edu.au
Visit our Website at: www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au

Statement of informed consent for:

Resilience in transition: the personal characteristics of resilience in young males that are sustaining and protective in the absence of contextual support characteristics.

I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study and the nature and possible effects have been explained to me. I understand that I have been asked to contribute to data collection to contribute to the understanding of the mental health implications of geographic dislocation, the mechanisms of personal resilience, and the pathways for intervention. This information will help to the design of appropriate support regimes to strengthen resilience.

I understand that my involvement will involve two specific areas:

1. In-depth interviews with participants at three monthly intervals.
2. The completion of instruments as a baseline, mid-point and end-point measurement of resilience

I understand that I am free to withdraw, and to seek further support if needed. I understand the importance of the self-care principles of accessing appropriate counselling support as required.

I understand that all the information provided would be treated as confidential and that any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree that the information gathered as a result of the research may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a subject.

I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without prejudice.

Name of participant: .....

Signature of participant:..... Date: .....

I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator:
.....

Signature of investigator: .....Date: .....

Appendix E

The NEO-FFI Professional Manual

By Paul T. Costa, Jr., Ph.D. and

Robert R. McCrae, Ph.D.

The NEO-FFI is a valid and reliable instrument consisting of the Professional Manual, the Form S test booklet and the NEO Summary.

The Form S Booklet is a four-page, carbonless paper form consisting of instructions, demographic information, 60 items and an area for recording the responses.

The NEO Summary provides a description of the individual's personality traits on the five-factors. These factors are **Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A),** and **Conscientiousness (C).**

Reliability:

The coefficient alpha for the short form (NEO-FFI) were reported as:

N=.90 E=.78 O=.76 A=.86 C=.90 (Costa & McCrae, 1992)

Validity:

The validity of the five factors was originally described in an analysis of natural language trait adjectives (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Convergent validity was explored in a number of studies (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and the scales show substantial correlations with appropriate criteria. Discriminate validity was described in appropriate and distinctive patterns that support the validity of the facet scales (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The short form NEO-FFI used a validimax method to maximise the convergent and discriminate validity of the larger instrument. For each domain the 10 items with the highest positive/negative loading were selected.

The NEO-FFI is a copyrighted document and cannot be reproduced as an appendix.

Copies of the NEO-FFI can be obtained from:

Psychological Assessment Resources (PAR), Inc.

P.O. Box 998

Odessa

Florida 33556

Costa, P., & McCrae, R. (1992). *The NEO PI-R Manual,* . Odessa, Florida,: Psychological Assessment Resources.

McCrae, J., & Costa, P. (1987). Validation of the five-factor model of personality across instruments and observers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*, 81-90.

Costa, P., & McCrae, R. (1998). Personality in adulthood: A six-year longitudinal study of self-reports and spouse ratings on the NEO Personality Inventory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*, 853-863.

McCrae, R., & Costa, P. (1991). The NEO personality inventory: Using the five-factor model in counselling. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 69*(4), 367-372.

Appendix F

Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB) (Ryff, 2003)

The Scales of Psychological Well Being (SPWB) are comprised of 84 item with a 6-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (moderately disagree), 3 (slightly disagree), 4 (slightly agree), 5 (moderately agree), 6 (strongly agree).

The six 14 item scales of psychological well-being are constructed to measure the dimensions of **Autonomy (A), Environmental mastery (E), Personal Growth (PG), Positive Relations with others (PR), Purpose in Life (PL), and Self Acceptance (SA).**

The original scale was constructed using definitional language analysis. The internal consistency coefficients were:

AU= .86 EV=.90 PG= .87 PR= .91 PL=.90 SA= .93

The test-retest reliability coefficients were:

AU= .88 EV=.81 PG= .81 PR= .83 PL=.82 SA= .85

The validity of the scales was tested using intercorrelations with other well-being measures and found to be significant:

Intercorrelations of Well-Being Measures

	1	2	3	4	5	6	LSI	ABS	SE	LEVP	LEVI	LEVC	ZDS	MS
1. SA	—						.73	.55	.62	−.45	.49	−.43	−.59	.59
2. PR	.52	—					.43	.30	.36	−.36	.37	−.33	−.33	.30
3. AU	.52	.32	—				.26	.36	.36	−.45	.38	−.38	−.38	.32
4. EM	.76	.45	.53	—			.61	.62	.55	−.47	.52	−.46	−.60	.62
5. PL	.72	.55	.46	.66	—		.59	.42	.49	−.37	.53	−.46	−.60	.55
6. PG	.48	.57	.39	.46	.72	—	.38	.25	.29	−.30	.38	−.39	−.48	.44

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .001$. New measures: SA = self-acceptance, PR = positive relations with others, AU = autonomy, EM = environmental mastery, PL = purpose in life, PG = personal growth. Former measures: LSI = Life Satisfaction Index (Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1961); ABS = Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969); SE = Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965); LEVP = Powerful Others, LEVI = Internal, LEVC = Chance (Levenson, 1974); ZDS = Zung Depression Scale (Zung, 1965); MS = Philadelphia Geriatric Morale Scale (Lawton, 1975).

From: Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57(6), 1069-1081, December 1989

Factor analysis supported the six factor model through theory guided dimensions. More detailed information is available in Ryff (1989).

Copies of the SPWB are available by contacting the author:

Dr. Carol Ryff
University of Wisconsin
Institute on Aging
2245 Medical Science Center
1300 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53706

cryff@wisc.edu

Ryff, C. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 6*, 1069-1081.

Ryff, C. (2003). Scales of Psychological Well-Being (pp. personal communication).

Appendix G

Orientation to Life Questionnaire

Sense of Coherence (SOC)

(Antonovsky, 1987)

The Sense of Coherence (SOC) was obtained by administering the Orientation to Life questionnaire. This 29 item instrument scores the participants' responses on three domains: **comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness.**

Each of the 29 items asks for a response using the following Likert Scale prompt:

"Here is a series of questions relating to various aspects of our lives. Each question has seven possible answers. Please mark the number that expresses your answer, with numbers 1 and 7 being the extreme answers. If the words under 1 are right for you, circle 1; if the words under 7 are right for you, circle 7. If you feel differently, circle the number which best expresses your feeling. Please give only one answer to each question".

The SOC refers to the global orientation to an individual's inner and outer environment. The scale was developed using a facet-theoretical design. Reliability for the SOC has been tested in a range of participants and has a consistent level of Cronbach's alpha ranging from .84 - .93 (Antonovsky, 1987).

Correlation studies indicated significant convergent and discriminant validity for the SOC. Criterion validity was supported by published studies see Antonovsky (1993) for a detailed list. Other normative data indicate SOC means and standard deviations that indicate consistency (validity) of the scales in a range of populations (Antonovsky, 1993, p. 730)

The psychometric properties of the questionnaire and the scales are available in the public domain see (Antonovsky, 1987).

Antonovsky, A. (1987). *Unravelling the Mystery of Health: how people manage stress and stay well.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Antonovsky, A. (1993). The structure and properties of the Sense of Coherence Scale. *Social Science & Medicine, 36*, 725-733.

Appendix H

Geographic Dislocation Scale (GDS)

(Harris, 2005)

Participants were asked to respond on the four point Likert Scale 1 (not at all), 2 (slightly), 3 (a fair bit), and 4 (extremely) to each of the items **(in control, apprehensive, excited, secure, alone, optimistic, afraid, and ready)** with the following prompt:

"Moving is an experience that can involve many different kinds of feelings. When you think about your move to the club, especially the changes and transitions that it involved, did you feel...?" The results appear below:

	C	App	E	S	L	O	F	R	GDS
1	1	1	4	2	3	3	2	3	19
2	2	3	4	2	2	3	2	3	21
3	3	2	4	2	2	2	2	3	20
4	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	2	17
5	3	3	4	2	2	3	3	2	22
6	2	2	3	3	2	3	1	2	18
7	4	4	4	3	2	4	3	3	27
8	4	3	4	4	3	3	2	2	25
9	2	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	19
10	3	1	4	3	2	2	1	1	17
11	4	4	3	4	1	4	3	4	27
12	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	19
13	3	3	4	2	3	3	2	2	22
14	2	3	3	4	2	2	2	2	20
15	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	28
16	4	2	3	4	2	3	2	3	23
17	2	3	3	3	2	3	1	1	18
18	3	3	4	3	2	2	2	3	22
19	2	2	4	3	2	3	2	3	21
20	3	2	3	2	1	3	2	2	18
21	3	3	4	2	2	3	2	2	21
22	4	2	4	3	1	2	2	4	22
23	2	2	4	4	3	3	3	4	25
24	3	2	3	3	1	3	1	3	19

Harris, M. W. (2005). *Geographic Dislocation Scale (GDS)*.Unpublished PhD manuscript.

Appendix I

The Transition Time Scale (TTS)

(Harris, 2005)

The participants were asked to reflect on their transition and mark the scale at the point where they were located, using the stage descriptions.

Face validity for the TTS was examined by distribution to colleagues and to club administrators, and the instrument was reckoned to be a fair description of the stages (Lacity & Jansen 1994). Content and construct validity was inferred from the expert literature, with particular reference to Nicholson (1984; 1987; 1990; Nicholson & West, 1988). The request was prefaced by the following prompt:

"Think about your journey to this organisation and where you might be on the scale below. Mark the point on the scale where you think you are currently located and estimate the time that it took to reach that point."

0 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 **10**

Stage 1	**Stage 2**	**Stage 3**
I am exploring what is involved in the transition.	I am adjusting to the changes and learning what is required.	I understand what is required and I am actively involved.

Time frame: The time-frames were discussed in detail, and participants were able to describe the journey in terms of the time taken to reach all of the incremental points that led to their current position. These were recorded for each of the participants.

The scale was developed by the researcher for this study.

Harris, M. W. (2005). *Geographic Dislocation Scale (GDS).*Unpublished manuscript.

Nicholson, N. (1984). A theory of work role transitions. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 29*, 172-191.

Nicholson, N. (1987). The transition cycle: A conceptual framework for the analysis of change and human resources management. In J. Ferris & K. Rowland (Eds.), *Personnel and Human Resources Management* (Vol. 5). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Nicholson, N. (1990). The transition cycle: causes, outcomes, processes and forms. In S. Fisher & C. Cooper (Eds.), *On the Move: The Psychology of Change and Transition*. UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Nicholson , N., & West, M. (1988). *Managerial Job Change*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix J

GDS Reliability Matrix

(Harris, 2005)

Participants were asked to respond on the four- point Likert Scale 1 (not at all), 2 (slightly), 3 (a fair bit), and 4 (extremely) to each of the items **(in control, apprehensive, excited, secure, alone, optimistic, afraid, and ready)** with the following prompt:

"Moving is an experience that can involve many different kinds of feelings. When you think about your move to the club, especially the changes and transitions that it involved, did you feel...?"

Reliability scores were investigated using Cronbach's Alpha, although limited by cohort numbers (N=24). A score for geographic dislocation was created by adding the 8 scores and yielded good reliability with an alpha coefficient of .794 The inter-item correlation matrix appears below:

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8
Q.1	1.000	.409	.457	.171	.564	.402	.307	.495
Q.2	.409	1.000	.329	.349	-.041	.000	.625	.791
Q.3	.457	.329	1.000	-.083	-.274	.391	-.149	.642
Q.4	.171	.349	-.083	1.000	.123	.293	.559	.505
Q.5	.564	-.041	-.274	.123	1.000	.386	.423	-.253
Q.6	.402	.000	.391	.293	.386	1.000	.262	.226
Q.7	.307	.625	-.149	.559	.423	.262	1.000	.430
Q.8	.495	.791	.642	.505	-.253	.226	.430	1.000

The GDS was developed by the researcher for this study.

Harris, M. W. (2005). *Geographic Dislocation Scale (GDS).*Unpublished PhD manuscript.

Appendix K

The Interview Schedule below provided the framework for the semi-structured interviews with the player group. The framework provided a structural guide for the interviews as well as suggested prompts for more information.

Preamble	
Before we start I'd just like to give you some background about why we're here. I'm talking to you here as part of a PhD research study, working in collaboration with the Club, to explore the experience of moving away from home and friends to take up your football career. I am interested in all aspects of your experience, so it is important to me and the study that you are as honest and as open as you can in responding to the questions. I also need to tell you that everything we discuss is strictly confidential and you will not be identified in any way. This information is not going to be given directly to the Club, but I shall be writing a report for them later about the general issues that you and others raise. I want to thank you for participating. It is a very important area that we don't know a lot about and you are contributing to an understanding of an experience that will help others in the future. This is not a test and there are no "right or wrong" answers. What is important is to tell me as much as you can about <u>your</u> experience in as much detail as possible. This interview should take approximately one hour and we will take breaks from time to time if we need to. You just let me know if you want to take a break.	
Before the draft Now ...let's talk about the time <u>before you were drafted.</u> Think especially about those things that you feel set you on that pathway. These things might be to do with your family or your school or a particular coach or playing football with other clubs or other things that have influenced you along the way.	**Prompts**
A1 Tell me all about yourself A2 ...and your journey to the Club E1 Tell me about when you first began to anticipate being drafted. C5 In what ways did you prepare for the move?	A1 Tell me about your background and the important things in your life. Are there any moments that have made a difference, people from whom you have drawn strength? E1 When did you begin to think an AFL career was possible? C5 What kept you going, what was helping?

Around the draft Let's talk about the time immediately surrounding the draft, i.e. the time leading up to the draft, the experience itself, and the time that followed.	**Prompts**
B2 What did you *expect* about the experience? B1 What did you *know* about what you would experience? G1 Has your life changed? How much has it changed? G2 What has been different? (timeframe also, in the beginning, now) G3 What has been the same? (timeframe also, in the beginning, now) C1 How did you find out what was required of you? C4 Who did you turn to for advice? H1 How confident were you about your ability to make the transition? I1 What helped you with the new pressures and expectations? (what worked for you?)	B2 How *aware* were you of the reality of the experience? B1 What kinds of things did you know or think you knew? G1 What has surprised you? What did you anticipate? Has the experience changed over time? Has the experience changed over time? C1 What sources of information were available to you? Did you seek information, use role models, actively prepare? Did you know how to *engage* in this new life challenge? H1 Self confidence? Had you faced problems successfully before? What was your frame of reference for this challenge? I1 What's your tip for others preparing for this experience? What were the things that made a difference?
Now Let's talk about your situation **now** and reflect a bit on the "journey" you have taken to this point in time.	**Prompts**
I2 How have the pressures and expectations changed over time? (when did it happen) I3 How do you think you contributed to those adjustments? B3 What do you know about yourself that gives you confidence? D1 Have you maintained contact with family and friends? D2 How have you done that? C2 Who has helped you along the way? C3 Who was/were the most important person/people (why)?	I2 What indications did you have that you were learning more of what you needed to know? I3 Did you do anything differently? B3 You're in a special situation and have had a chance to reflect on how you operate C2 When was that? What do you remember about that moment?

D3 Have you had to make changes in the way you do things? D4 What sort of changes have you made? F1 Some people who go through this process find themselves going through a range of experiences...how do you think you're going at the moment? F2 On this scale, where would you put yourself? G4 How would you describe the culture of the club? G5 Similarities / differences? H3 What was easy for you? H2 What did you find difficult in the transition? E3 When was the experience most clear and working well? E2 Reflecting on the experience so far, when was it most confusing?	D3 What kinds of changes have been involved, and how have you adapted to those? F1 In your life, your adjustments, routines and in yourself? **Scales here** G4 How are things done differently. Is this different from your home, your school or other clubs with whom you have been associated? H3, H2, E3 & E2 What was the time frame? When did it begin to feel familiar?
Summary How would you sum up the time you have described? What are the key things that stick in your mind? What advice would you have for others going through the same experience? Thank you for your participation, your thoughts and insights are a valuable contribution to a better understanding of the experience of "thriving in periods of geographic dislocation".	Prompt for issues that might have been missed. Allow some time for reflection about the journey. Note the things regarded as important in the form of advice to others. How does this tally with their own experience?

Appendix L

The Interview Schedule below provided the framework for the semi-structured interviews with the administration group. The framework provided a structural guide for the interviews as well as suggested prompts for more information.

Preamble	
Before we start I'd just like to give you some background about why we're here. I'm talking to you here as part of a PhD research study, working in collaboration with your club to explore the experience of moving away from home and friends to take up a football career. I am interested in all aspects of the experience, so it is important to me and the study that you are as honest and as open as you can in responding to the questions. I also need to tell you that everything we discuss is strictly confidential and you will not be identified in any way. This information is not going to be given directly to the Club, but I shall be writing a report for them later about the general issues that you and others raise. I want to thank you for participating. It is a very important area that we don't know a lot about and you are contributing to an understanding of an experience that will help others in the future. This is not a test and there are no "right or wrong" answers. What is important is to tell me as much as you can about the experience in as much detail as possible. This interview should take approximately one hour and we will take breaks from time to time if we need to. You just let me know if you want to take a break.	
	Prompts
What is the club looking for?	The types, the backgrounds and so on.
How predictable are the choices in terms of success?	Measurements of success? Ability to explore the characteristics of the individuals?
How much of the family background to you research?	What are the important aspects of that research? Why does it matter?
What are the processes you use to rank players for selection?	What things are important? Are there gaps between expectations and outcomes?
How do you know if you've got the 'right mix'	What preparations do you make for the players? How do you measure their progress? How are they assisted?

How confidential are the arrangements?	What information do the players get? What can they rely on? What preparations can they make?
What are the common features of success?	Are some things the same? Are some things random? What are the known things?
What are your priorities for selection?	How do you rank choices? How do you assist players and families to prepare? What kinds of promises do you make? How random is the process?
What is the role of the club 'post' selection	How do you help them? Who does what? Why do some do well and other don't? Is luck important?
What dislocation issues are you aware of?	How have you accounted for these in your arrangements? What evidence do you have? What changes have been made in your experience?
Is family support valued?	How?
Why do some recruits thrive and others languish?	Give me a deeper understanding of those thoughts.
Thank you for your participation, your thoughts and insights are a valuable contribution to a better understanding of the experience of "thriving in periods of geographic dislocation".	

Appendix M(i)

Participant #01 Individual results across instruments

Low	Mod	High

GDS

C	App	E	S	L	O	F	R	GDS
8	8	16	8	12	12	8	12	84

High levels of excitement and feeling the challenge is difficult but manageable; anxious and feeling somewhat unprepared and insecure.

SPWB

a	em	pg	pr	pl	sa
75	67	67	72	71	72

- Is self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behavior from within; evaluates self by personal standards.
- Has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values.
- Has a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; has sense of realizing his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behavior over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self knowledge and effectiveness.
- Has warm satisfying, trusting relationships with others; is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; understands give and take of human relationships.
- Has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living.
- Possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life.

SOC

Comprehensible	Manageable	Meaningful	SOC
46	60	50	156

Is able to select the particular coping strategy that is appropriate to deal with the challenge; is able to choose from a range of responses; is able to mobilise the resources; is more likely to feel a sense of engagement, commitment and willingness to cope with the challenge; the boundaries of what is meaningful are flexible and adaptable, rather than self-deceiving; will see the challenge as having parameters requiring resources to be met adequately and searching for those resources; is able to choose the best strategy; is aware of emotions and describe them and harness them; is able to accord blame or responsibility calmly and accurately.

NEO-FFI

N	E	O	A	C
11	37	34	25	35

- Secure, hardy, and generally relaxed even under stressful conditions.
- Extraverted, outgoing, active and high spirited, preferring to be around people most of the time
- Open to new experiences... broad interests and imaginative
- Hard-headed, sceptical, proud and competitive...expresses anger directly
- Conscientious and well organised...high standards and strives to achieve goals

Explanatory notes

GDS

Low: engaged and unafraid; relaxed about the transition and ready for the challenge.
Moderate: high levels of excitement and feeling the challenge is difficult but manageable; anxious and feeling somewhat unprepared and insecure.
High: high levels of excitement, but feeling the challenge is unmanageable; pessimistic about success; feeling anxious and insecure.

SPWB

Autonomy: Low Scorer: Is concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others; relies on judgments of others to make important decisions; conforms to social pressures to think and act in certain ways.
High Scorer: Is self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behavior from within; evaluates self by personal standards.
Environmental mastery: Low Scorer: Has difficulty managing everyday affairs; feels unable to change or improve surrounding context; is unaware of surrounding opportunities; lacks sense of control over external world.
High Scorer: Has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values.
Personal growth: Low Scorer: Has a sense of personal stagnation; lacks sense of improvement or expansion over time; feels bored and uninterested with life; feels unable to develop new attitudes or behaviors.
High Scorer: Has a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; has sense of realizing his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behavior over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self knowledge and effectiveness.
Positive relations with others: Low Scorer: Has few close, trusting relationships with others; finds it difficult to be warm, open, and concerned about others; is isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships; not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others.
High Scorer: Has warm satisfying, trusting relationships with others; is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; understands give and take of human relationships.
Purpose in Life: Low Scorer: Lacks a sense of meaning in life; has few goals or aims, lacks sense of direction; does not see purpose of past life; has no outlook or beliefs that give life meaning.
High Scorer: Has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living.
Self Acceptance: Low Scorer: Feels dissatisfied with self; is disappointed with what has occurred in past life; is troubled about certain personal qualities; wishes to be different than what he or she is.
High Scorer: Possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life.

SOC

Strong: is able to select the particular coping strategy that is appropriate to deal with the challenge; is able to choose from a range of responses; is able to mobilise the resources; is more likely to feel a sense of engagement, commitment and willingness to cope with the challenge; the boundaries of what is meaningful are flexible and adaptable, rather than self-deceiving; will see the challenge as having parameters requiring resources to be met adequately and searching for those resources; is able to choose the best strategy; is aware of emotions and describe them and harness them; is able to accord blame or responsibility calmly and accurately;
Weak: sees the challenge as burdensome and bringing the emotional distress that accompanies such a challenge; thinks chaos is inevitable, gives up in advance of any real attempt to engage the challenge and moves towards coping with the emotional distress; is unlikely to recognise the emotions but be overwhelmed by them; is likely to blame others or 'luck' for their circumstance

NEO-FFI	High	Average	Low
Neuroticism (N)	Sensitive, emotional, and prone to experience feelings that are upsetting	Generally calm; able to deal with stress, but sometimes experiences feelings of guilt, anger or sadness	Secure, hardy, and generally relaxed even under stressful conditions.
Extraversion (E)	Extraverted, outgoing, active and high spirited, preferring to be around people most of the time.	Moderate in activity and enthusiasm. Enjoys the company of others but values privacy	Introverted, reserved and serious... prefers to be alone or with a few close friends
Openness (O)	Open to new experiences... broad interests and imaginative	Practical but willing to consider new ways of doing things...seeking a balance between old and new	Down to earth, practical, traditional and set in ways.
Agreeableness (A)	Compassionate, good natured and eager to cooperate and avoid conflicts	Generally warm and trusting and agreeable but sometimes stubborn and competitive	Hard-headed, sceptical, proud and competitive...expresses anger directly
Conscientiousness (C)	Conscientious and well organised...high standards and strives to achieve goals.	Dependable and moderately well-organised... generally clear goals but able to set work aside	Easygoing and not well organised and sometimes careless. Prefer not to make plans.

Appendix M(ii)
Participant #18

Individual results across instruments

Low | Mod | High

GDS

C	App	E	S	L	O	F	R	GDS
12	12	16	12	8	8	8	12	88

High levels of excitement and feeling the challenge is difficult but manageable; anxious and feeling somewhat unprepared and insecure.

SPWB

a	em	pg	pr	pl	sa
54	56	64	55	63	61

- Is self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behavior from within; evaluates self by personal standards.
- Has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values.
- Has a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; has sense of realizing his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behavior over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self knowledge and effectiveness.
- Has warm satisfying, trusting relationships with others; is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; understands give and take of human relationships.
- Has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living.
- Possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life.

SOC

Comprehensible	Manageable	Meaningful	SOC
38	47	45	130

Is able to select the particular coping strategy that is appropriate to deal with the challenge; is able to choose from a range of responses; is able to mobilise the resources; is more likely to feel a sense of engagement, commitment and willingness to cope with the challenge; the boundaries of what is meaningful are flexible and adaptable, rather than self-deceiving; will see the challenge as having parameters requiring resources to be met adequately and searching for those resources; is able to choose the best strategy; is aware of emotions and describe them and harness them; is able to accord blame or responsibility calmly and accurately.

NEO-FFI

N	E	O	A	C
26	32	26	31	33

- Sensitive, emotional, and prone to experience feelings that are upsetting
- Extraverted, outgoing, active and high spirited, preferring to be around people most of the time.
- Practical but willing to consider new ways of doing things...seeking a balance between old and new
- Generally warm and trusting and agreeable but sometimes stubborn and competitive
- Dependable and moderately well-organised... generally clear goals but able to set work aside

Explanatory notes

GDS

Low: engaged and unafraid; relaxed about the transition and ready for the challenge.
Moderate: high levels of excitement and feeling the challenge is difficult but manageable; anxious and feeling somewhat unprepared and insecure.
High: high levels of excitement, but feeling the challenge is unmanageable; pessimistic about success; feeling anxious and insecure.

SPWB

Autonomy: Low Scorer: Is concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others; relies on judgments of others to make important decisions; conforms to social pressures to think and act in certain ways.
High Scorer: Is self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behavior from within; evaluates self by personal standards.
Environmental mastery: Low Scorer: Has difficulty managing everyday affairs; feels unable to change or improve surrounding context; is unaware of surrounding opportunities; lacks sense of control over external world.
High Scorer: Has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values.
Personal growth: Low Scorer: Has a sense of personal stagnation; lacks sense of improvement or expansion over time; feels bored and uninterested with life; feels unable to develop new attitudes or behaviors.
High Scorer: Has a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; has sense of realizing his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behavior over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self knowledge and effectiveness.
Positive relations with others: Low Scorer: Has few close, trusting relationships with others; finds it difficult to be warm, open, and concerned about others; is isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships; not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others.
High Scorer: Has warm satisfying, trusting relationships with others; is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; understands give and take of human relationships.
Purpose in Life: Low Scorer: Lacks a sense of meaning in life; has few goals or aims, lacks sense of direction; does not see purpose of past life; has no outlook or beliefs that give life meaning.
High Scorer: Has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living.
Self Acceptance: Low Scorer: Feels dissatisfied with self; is disappointed with what has occurred in past life; is troubled about certain personal qualities; wishes to be different than what he or she is.
High Scorer: Possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life.

SOC

Strong: is able to select the particular coping strategy that is appropriate to deal with the challenge; is able to choose from a range of responses; is able to mobilise the resources; is more likely to feel a sense of engagement, commitment and willingness to cope with the challenge; the boundaries of what is meaningful are flexible and adaptable, rather than self-deceiving; will see the challenge as having parameters requiring resources to be met adequately and searching for those resources; is able to choose the best strategy; is aware of emotions and describe them and harness them; is able to accord blame or responsibility calmly and accurately;
Weak: sees the challenge as burdensome and bringing the emotional distress that accompanies such a challenge; thinks chaos is inevitable, gives up in advance of any real attempt to engage the challenge and moves towards coping with the emotional distress; is unlikely to recognise the emotions but be overwhelmed by them; is likely to blame others or 'luck' for their circumstance

NEO-FFI	High	Average	Low
Neuroticism (N)	Sensitive, emotional, and prone to experience feelings that are upsetting	Generally calm; able to deal with stress, but sometimes experiences feelings of guilt, anger or sadness	Secure, hardy, and generally relaxed even under stressful conditions.
Extraversion (E)	Extraverted, outgoing, active and high spirited, preferring to be around people most of the time.	Moderate in activity and enthusiasm. Enjoys the company of others but values privacy	Introverted, reserved and serious... prefers to be alone or with a few close friends
Openness (O)	Open to new experiences... broad interests and imaginative	Practical but willing to consider new ways of doing things...seeking a balance between old and new	Down to earth, practical, traditional and set in ways.
Agreeableness (A)	Compassionate, good natured and eager to cooperate and avoid conflicts	Generally warm and trusting and agreeable but sometimes stubborn and competitive	Hard-headed, sceptical, proud and competitive...expresses anger directly
Conscientiousness (C)	Conscientious and well organised...high standards and strives to achieve goals	Dependable and moderately well-organised... generally clear goals but able to set work aside	Easygoing and not well organised and sometimes careless. Prefer not to make plans.

Appendix M(iii)

Participant #11 Individual results across instruments

Low | Mod | High

GDS

C	App	E	S	L	O	F	R	GDS
16	16	12	16	4	16	12	16	108

High levels of excitement, but feeling the challenge is unmanageable; pessimistic about success; feeling anxious and insecure.

SPWB

a	em	pg	pr	pl	sa
47	50	68	61	58	54

- Is concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others; relies on judgments of others to make important decisions; conforms to social pressures to think and act in certain ways.
- Has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values.
- Has a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; has sense of realizing his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behavior over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self knowledge and effectiveness.
- Has warm satisfying, trusting relationships with others; is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; understands give and take of human relationships.
- Has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living.
- Possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life.

SOC

Comprehensible	Manageable	Meaningful	SOC
40	48	39	127

Is able to select the particular coping strategy that is appropriate to deal with the challenge; is able to choose from a range of responses; is able to mobilise the resources; is more likely to feel a sense of engagement, commitment and willingness to cope with the challenge; the boundaries of what is meaningful are flexible and adaptable, rather than self-deceiving; will see the challenge as having parameters requiring resources to be met adequately and searching for those resources; is able to choose the best strategy; is aware of emotions and describe them and harness them; is able to accord blame or responsibility calmly and accurately;

NEO-FFI

N	E	O	A	C
15	37	18	31	26

- Generally calm; able to deal with stress, but sometimes experiences feelings of guilt, anger or sadness
- Extraverted, outgoing, active and high spirited, preferring to be around people most of the time
- Down to earth, practical, traditional and set in ways.
- Generally warm and trusting and agreeable but sometimes stubborn and competitive
- Easygoing and not well organised and sometimes careless. Prefer not to make plans.

Explanatory notes

GDS

Low: engaged and unafraid; relaxed about the transition and ready for the challenge.
Moderate: high levels of excitement and feeling the challenge is difficult but manageable; anxious and feeling somewhat unprepared and insecure.
High: high levels of excitement, but feeling the challenge is unmanageable; pessimistic about success; feeling anxious and insecure.

SPWB

Autonomy: Low Scorer: Is concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others; relies on judgments of others to make important decisions; conforms to social pressures to think and act in certain ways.
High Scorer: Is self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behavior from within; evaluates self by personal standards.
Environmental mastery: Low Scorer: Has difficulty managing everyday affairs; feels unable to change or improve surrounding context; is unaware of surrounding opportunities; lacks sense of control over external world.
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Purpose in Life: Low Scorer: Lacks a sense of meaning in life; has few goals or aims, lacks sense of direction; does not see purpose of past life; has no outlook or beliefs that give life meaning.
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SOC

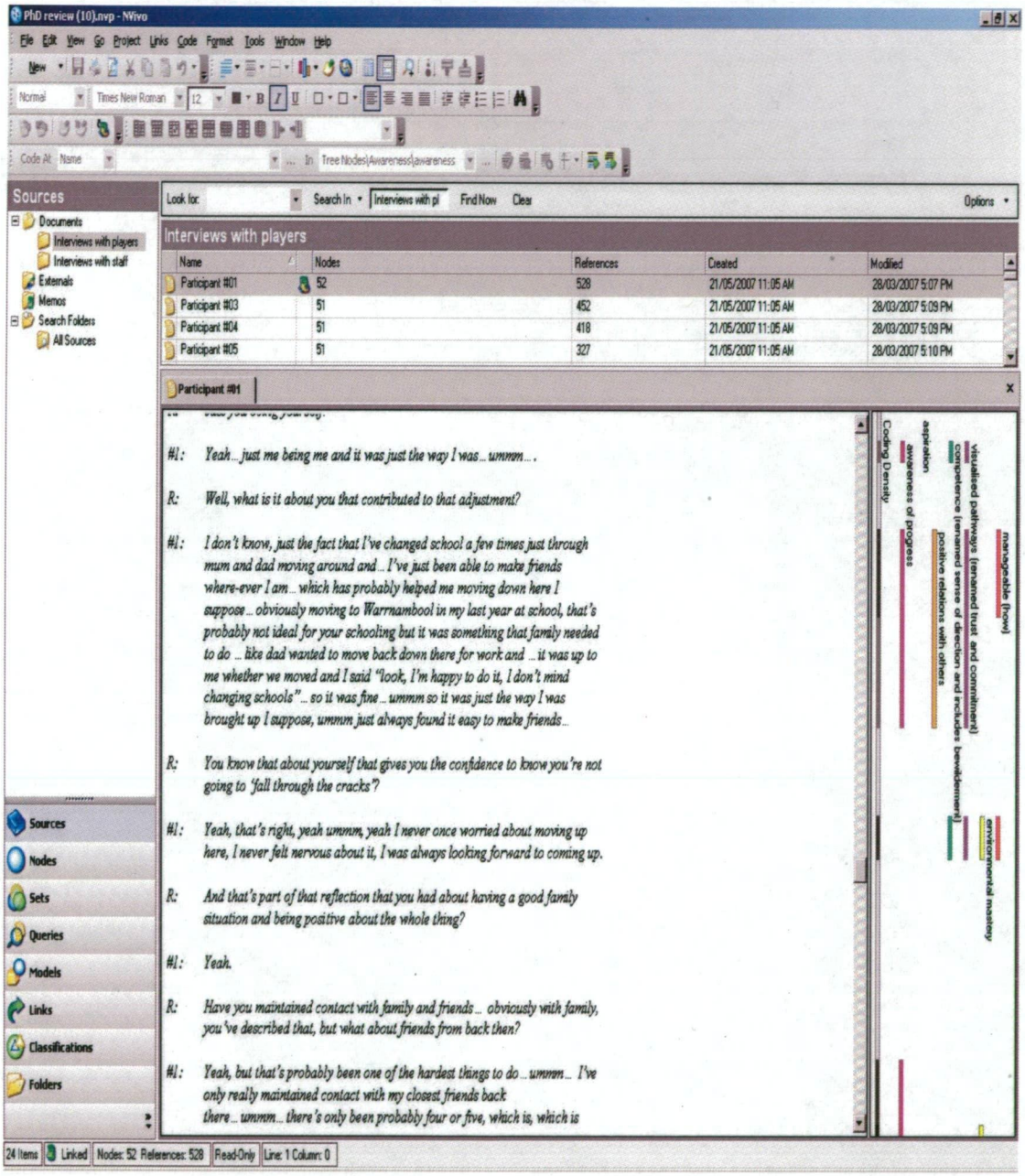
Strong: is able to select the particular coping strategy that is appropriate to deal with the challenge; is able to choose from a range of responses; is able to mobilise the resources; is more likely to feel a sense of engagement, commitment and willingness to cope with the challenge; the boundaries of what is meaningful are flexible and adaptable, rather than self-deceiving; will see the challenge as having parameters requiring resources to be met adequately and searching for those resources; is able to choose the best strategy; is aware of emotions and describe them and harness them; is able to accord blame or responsibility calmly and accurately;
Weak: sees the challenge as burdensome and bringing the emotional distress that accompanies such a challenge; thinks chaos is inevitable, gives up in advance of any real attempt to engage the challenge and moves towards coping with the emotional distress; is unlikely to recognise the emotions but be overwhelmed by them; is likely to blame others or 'luck' for their circumstance

NEO-FFI	High	Average	Low
Neuroticism (N)	Sensitive, emotional, and prone to experience feelings that are upsetting	Generally calm; able to deal with stress, but sometimes experiences feelings of guilt, anger or sadness	Secure, hardy, and generally relaxed even under stressful conditions.
Extraversion (E)	Extraverted, outgoing, active and high spirited, preferring to be around people most of the time.	Moderate in activity and enthusiasm. Enjoys the company of others but values privacy	Introverted, reserved and serious... prefers to be alone or with a few close friends
Openness (O)	Open to new experiences... broad interests and imaginative	Practical but willing to consider new ways of doing things...seeking a balance between old and new	Down to earth, practical, traditional and set in ways.
Agreeableness (A)	Compassionate, good natured and eager to cooperate and avoid conflicts	Generally warm and trusting and agreeable but sometimes stubborn and competitive	Hard-headed, sceptical, proud and competitive...expresses anger directly
Conscientiousness (C)	Conscientious and well organised...high standards and strives to achieve goals	Dependable and moderately well-organised... generally clear goals but able to set work aside	Easygoing and not well organised and sometimes careless. Prefer not to make plans.

Appendix N (i)

NVivo Coding

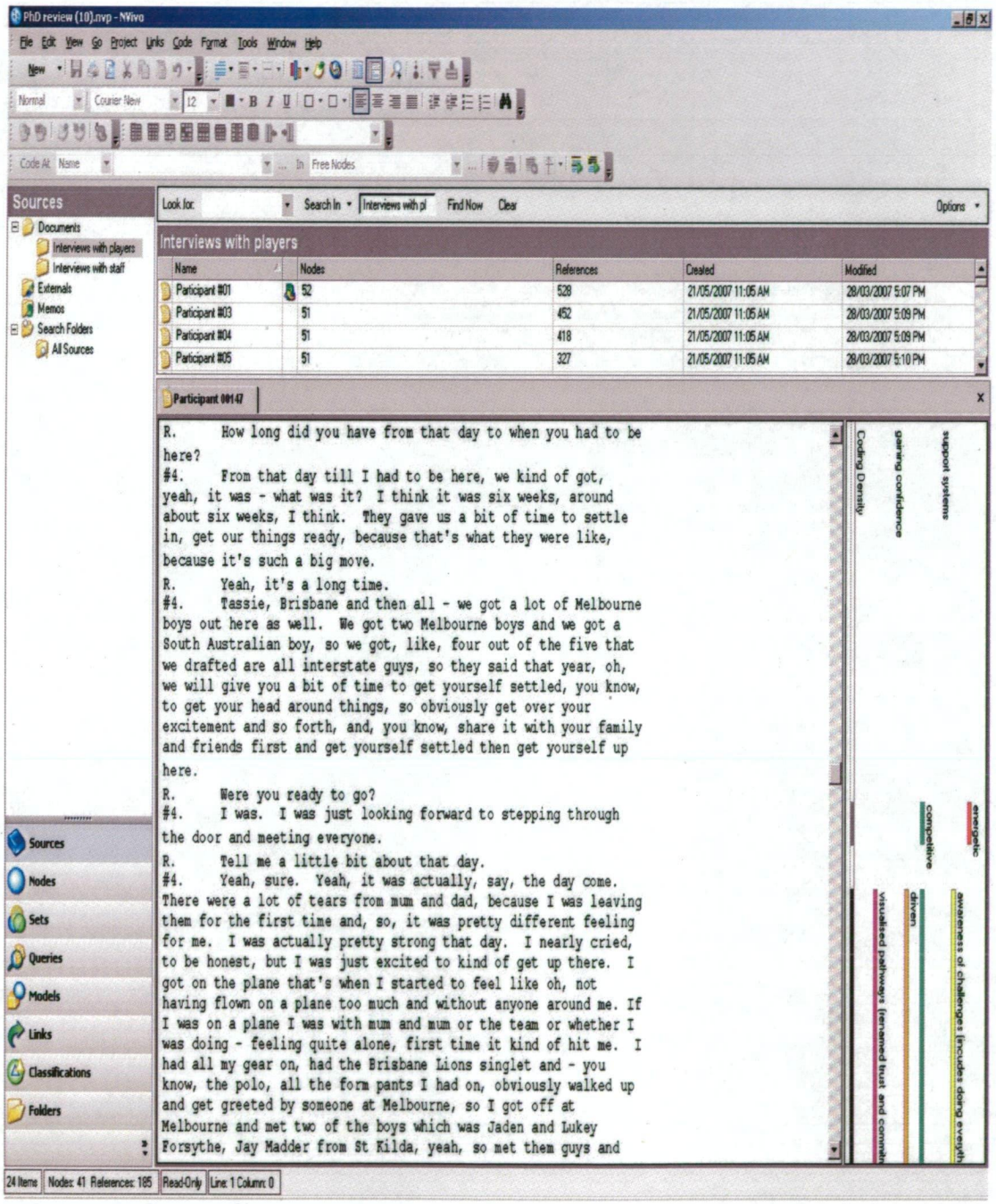
Participants were coded using the NVivo 9 software and coding 'concepts' and underlying themes developed from the iterative process. An exemplar of the coding documentation appears below.



Appendix N (ii)

NVivo Coding

Participants were coded using the NVivo 9 software and coding 'concepts' and underlying themes developed from the iterative process. An exemplar of the coding documentation appears below.



Appendix O (i)

Concept summary (exemplar)

Code Area: *Readiness for the challenges*
Definition: "being able to identify the challenges ahead"

Guide: The coding is based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (has difficulty identifying the challenges ahead - *enthusiasm **without** insight*), moderate (being able to identify the challenges ahead – *enthusiasm and **some** insight*), or strong (being able to identify the challenges ahead and have a plan to deal with them – *enthusiasm **and** insight*). Participants may have examples across the range of responses and the weight of evidence will vary.

Examples:

Weak:

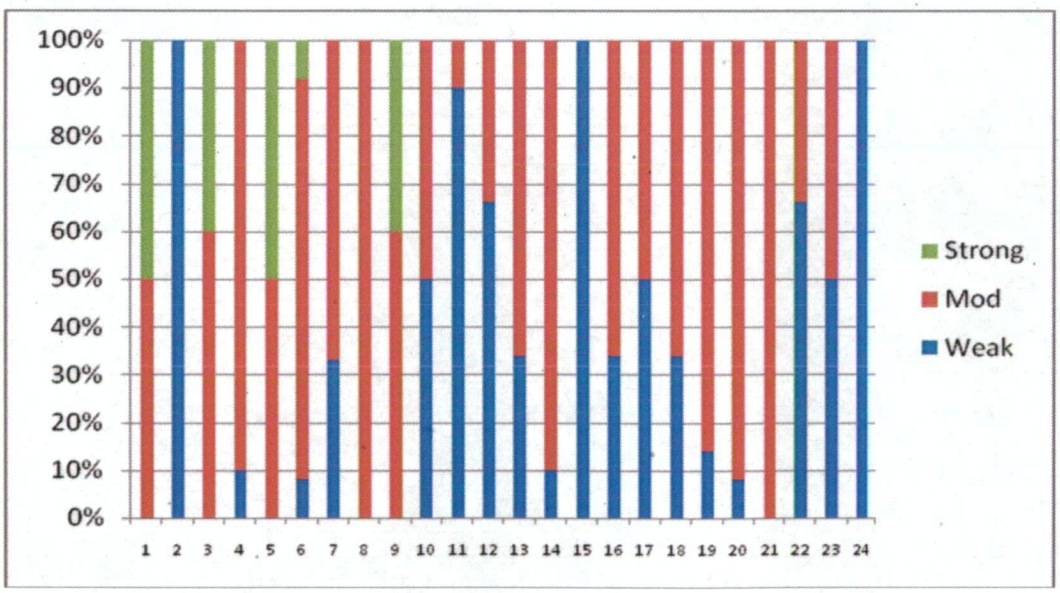
- *Umm, I guess so, I probably put a bit of pressure on myself as well…I try not to… I don't think the outside pressures influences really influence me that much but I guess it's grown in your own mind about what will happen and you do get a bit ahead of yourself.*

Moderate:

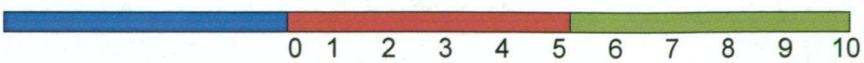
- *I suppose it comes with playing well, but also being ummm…I don't know…a good performer during pre-season and also a good performer during the year, so it probably comes about last year…last year I was respected as being a senior player…it comes about …you gain their respect when you are in there every week and you're actively contributing to the side rather than just making up the numbers.*

Strong:

- *Yep, and I think I'm very - I'm hard on myself, like, I have a good sense of reality and if I'm going well, I'm going well, but if I'm not, I know I need to improve.*



Coding strength calibration obtained using the Likert Scale below:



Appendix O (ii)

Concept summary (exemplar)

Code Area: *Gaining confidence*

Definition: "developing the understanding of what is required and how to get there and the importance of positive self-concepts to negotiate transitions"

Guide: The coding is based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (not confident about the next step and a lack of real clarity about direction), moderate (emerging confidence and a general idea of direction), or strong (being confident about what is required and a real sense of direction).
Participants may have examples across the range of responses and the weight of evidence will vary.

Examples:

Weak:

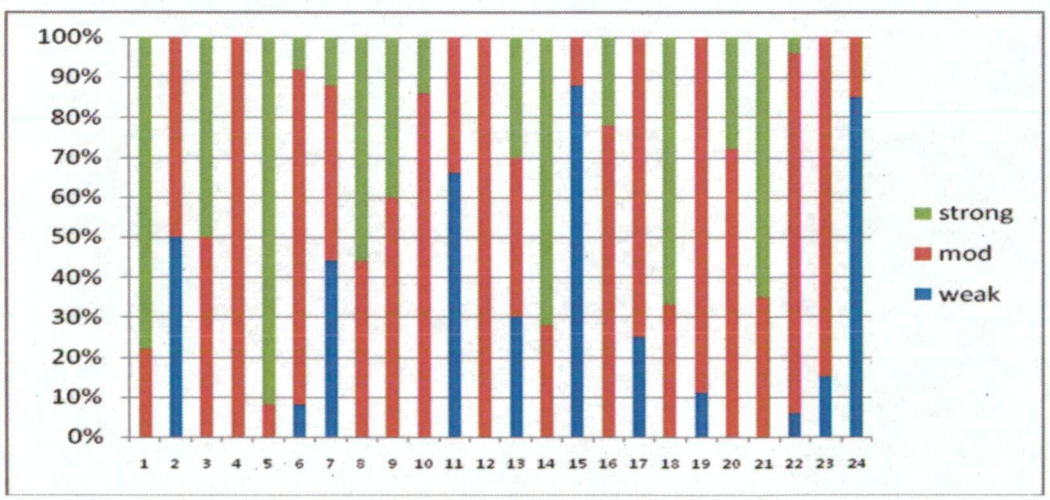
- *I remember missing sessions and that for a month because I couldn't …because I wasn't used to a routine… I remember missing sessions and you know, the first and second time were okay, you know, but then the third time you were called in by the coach and you know "get your shit together", you know "grow up!" and copping all this sort of stuff*

Moderate:

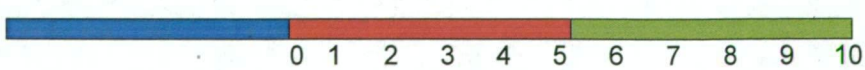
- *I never doubted my ability and always thought I could beat anyone…one on one …but I guess it was just the mentality of not putting myself all the way out there, because I thought I wasn't as good as them*

Strong:

- *Ummm, I think I just…I know how to prepare and I think I know how to play a good game… I think I know my part in the team and I think…yeah, I think I know what's required and I think…I know, I know that I can produce it, so ummm I think that gives me a lot of confidence that I have….that I have done my required job in the past and that I know how to do it.*



Coding strength calibration obtained using the Likert Scale below:



Appendix O (iii)

Concept summary (exemplar)

Code Area: *Support systems*

Definition: "robustness of support systems"

Guide: The coding is based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (alone, searching...unavailable systems), moderate (competing interests), or strong (a solid available support system). Participants may have examples across the range of responses and the weight of evidence will vary.

Examples:

Weak:

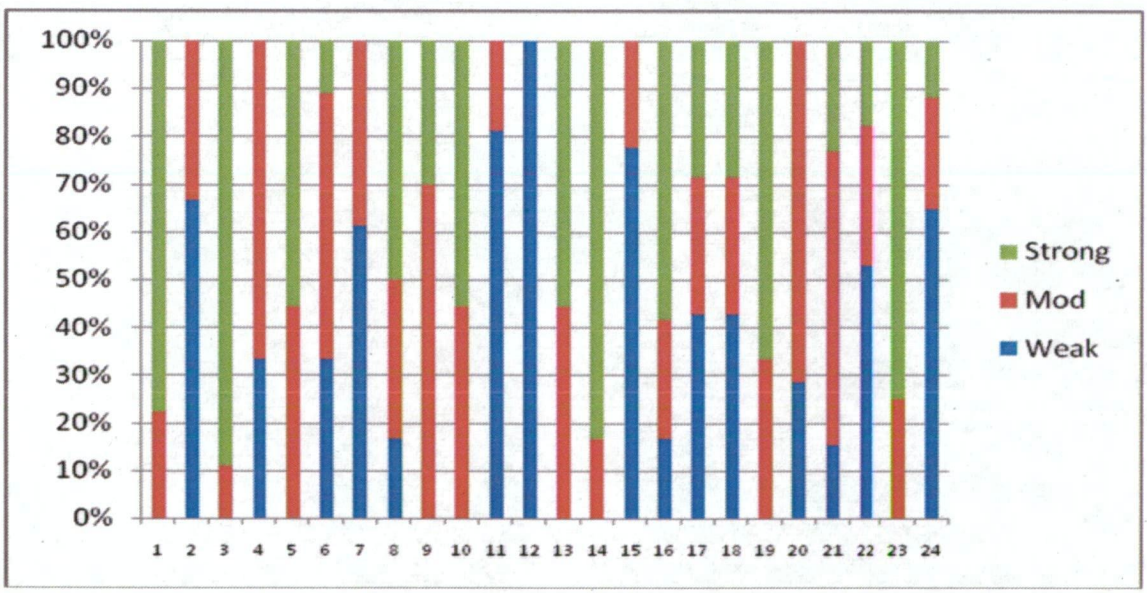
- *Long-term, I've got a few good friends, about four or five guys that play at Sydney and a few sort of people around Sydney that I'm good friends with, and new friends up here. I haven't really branched out and made a lot of friends outside footy here yet which it's not what I want to do.*

Moderate:

- *so I've always had the family environment and these people were just terrific...ummm I reckon if they weren't there, like if just moved in with another bloke I would've definitely got homesick and missed the family,*

Strong:

- *Family first yeah...I always keep in touch with my family...like we were always pretty close growing up...like my parents were...ummm...very dedicated towards myself and brother's sports ...ummm, being in the country... when I was living at home they would, ummm take it in turns and drive me down...ummm two and a half hours there and two and a half hours back...ummm every weekend throughout they year to take me, or my brother, to sports...so, they were always dedicated like that and we were pretty close like that...*



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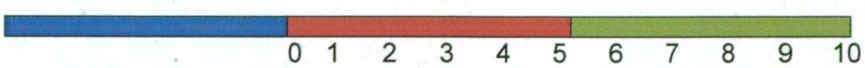


Appendix O (iv)

Concept summary (exemplar)

Code Area: *environmental mastery*

Definition: From lacking a sense of control to competence over environment

Guide: The coding is based on the interpretation of the coded comments from participants as being weak (having difficulty managing the environment), moderate (wrestling with competing interests), or strong (mastery of environment). Participants may have examples across the range of responses and the weight of evidence will vary.

Examples:

Weak:

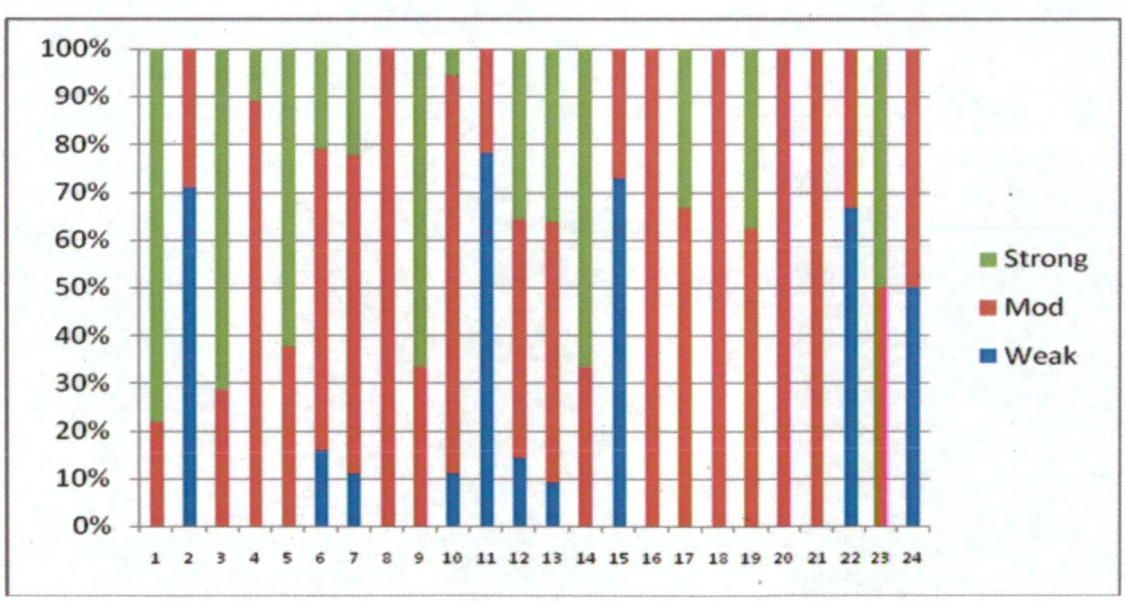
- *Yeah… ummm, I reckon it was a bit… a bit blurred when I first came. I think… ummm the first night when I came over I didn't really know …I knew…I knew it was going to be hard work but I didn't know exactly…*

Moderate:

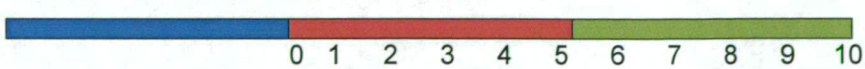
- *Oh, I think it's a great life… ohh a learning curve, even if it does ...as a bare minimum, last two years…I'll still go back to …if I go back home or whatever I'll be …like I'll have learnt so many …so many new things… so …and living away from home and meeting new people and making new friends and all the rest of it…I'll have had a lot of experiences, so I guess that's the main…*

Strong:

- *I was watching who was where I wanted to be, I just watched them, asked them questions, assistant coaches, just realising through trial and error, I suppose, what sort of work ethic you needed to build up to become an AFL player.*



Coding strength calibration obtained using the Likert Scale below:



Appendix P (i)

NVivo expanded coding themes

The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews was coded through an iterative process and the coded 'concepts' assembled at the stages of the transition.

Stage 1

"Expanded Themes" Stage One		Sources (Participants)	References (Code density)
1. Readiness for the challenge (5);		24	511
	· New independence	23	167
	· Initial reaction	7	14
	· Getting the hang of it all	21	183
	· Getting the right message	22	23
	· Working through problems	21	124
2. Motivation (5);		24	148
	· Energetic	17	49
	· Optimistic	15	54
	· Measured	18	37
	· Withdrawn	5	8
	· Enthusiastic	9	34
3. Positive planning (6);		24	200
	· Hanging on to concerns	7	21
	· Able to let go	9	22
	· Impulsive	2	3
	· Considered	9	40
	· Loss of person	18	76
	· Loss of place	17	38
4. Comprehensibility (4);		24	364
	· I don't know what is going on	24	93
	· I know what is going on	24	188
	· I know what to do	24	62
	· I don't know what to do	24	21

Concepts = 4

Underlying themes = 20

Appendix P (ii)

NVivo expanded coding themes

The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews was coded through an iterative process and the coded 'concepts' assembled at the stages of the transition.

Stage 2

"Expanded Themes" **Stage Two**		Sources (Participants)	References (Code density)
1. Gaining confidence (4);		24	481
	Learning lessons	24	237
	Long term plans	13	40
	Unfolding dreams	23	126
	Whatever it takes	19	78
3. Sense-making (6);		24	1050
	A slave to the system	17	64
	Seeing the big picture	22	124
	What works for me	24	190
	Developing confidence	18	207
	Watching and learning	24	183
	Bewilderment	24	282
4. Meaningfulness (2);		24	117
	I don't know why I'm doing this	10	58
	I know why I'm doing this	14	59
5. Engagement (4);		24	277
	Loneliness	13	88
	Camaraderie	24	92
	Isolation	15	30
	Family backup	24	67

Concepts = 4

Underlying themes = 16

Appendix P (iii)

NVivo expanded coding themes

The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews was coded through an iterative process and the coded 'concepts' assembled at the stages of the transition.

Stage 3

"Expanded Themes" Stage Three	Sources (Participants)	References (Code density)
1. Support systems (3);	24	254
· Mentors	11	23
· Family backup	24	140
· Friends	24	91
2. Role development (7);	24	381
· Altruistic	10	56
· Keen to please	12	89
· Calculating	24	194
· Competitive	11	42
· Confused	12	36
· Less exacting	9	15
· Organised	17	35
3. Manageability (4);	24	367
· I don't know how to manage	15	63
· I know how to manage	24	178
· I know how this works	17	111
· I don't know how this works	5	15
4. Personal development (2);	24	161
· Positive acceptance of change	12	119
· Open to new experiences	17	42

Concepts = 4

Underlying themes = 16

Appendix Q (i)

Attribution to 'Categories' (Stage 1)

The application of a calibrated Likert Scale to the "Concepts" enabled the assignment of scores to provide a comparative measurement to attribute the participants to the "Categories".

These score appear below:

C. Alpha	0.9005
Mean	22
S/D	7.17

thrive
survive
languish

Participants	Readiness	Motivation	Positive planning	Comprehensible	Preparation Stage Clusters
1	8	7.75	9.5	8	33.25
5	7.75	8.5	8.75	8	33
3	7.5	7.5	9.5	8	32.5
9	6.75	8	8	6.5	29.25
16	6	8.75	9.25	5	29
21	6.5	9.25	8.25	5	29
13	4.5	8	9.25	6	27.75
8	5.75	8	7	5	25.75
10	4.25	7.5	9	4.5	25.25
19	5.25	7.5	6.75	5	24.5
6	5.5	6	6.5	5.5	23.5
17	5	6.25	7	5	23.25
20	4	7	6.75	5	22.75
14	3.75	6.75	6.75	4.5	21.75
23	3	6.25	7.5	2.5	19.25
18	5	5	5.75	2.5	18.25
24	1	5.25	5.5	6.5	18.25
4	4.75	3.75	5	4	17.5
12	4.25	5.5	3.75	2.5	16
7	3.25	6	4.25	2	15.5
2	1	6	4	2.5	13.5
15	0.5	5.75	3.75	0	10
22	3.5	5	1.25	0	9.75
11	1.5	4.5	2	1.5	9.5

Appendix Q (ii)

Attribution to 'Categories' (Stage 2)

The application of a calibrated Likert Scale to the "Concepts" enabled the assignment of scores to provide a comparative measurement to attribute the participants to the "Categories".

These score appear below:

C/Alpha	0.8171
Mean	20.82
S/D	7.06

thrive
survive
languish

Participants	Gaining confidence	Sense-making	Meaningful	Engagement	Encounter Stage clusters
1	8.5	8	10	8.5	35
5	9	8.25	8	7.5	32.75
3	7	8	9	8.5	32.5
9	6.5	6.5	5	10	28
21	8	6.75	6	5	25.75
20	6	6.25	8	5	25.25
14	8	6.25	5	5	24.25
16	6	5.75	2.5	10	24.25
10	5.5	6	5	6.5	23
6	5	6.5	6	5	22.5
18	8	5.5	3	5	21.5
23	4	7	5	5	21
4	5	6.5	5	3.5	20
19	4.5	5.5	5	5	20
13	5	6.5	5	3	19.5
8	7.5	4.5	2.5	5	19.5
17	3.5	4.25	6.5	5	19.25
12	5.5	5	3	3	16.5
7	4	5.75	1.5	5	16.25
22	5	3.25	5	0	13.25
24	1.5	4.5	2	5	13
2	2.5	3	2	1.5	9
15	1	3	0	5	9
11	1.5	4.25	0	3	8.75

Appendix Q (iii)

Attribution to 'Categories' (Stage 3)

The application of a calibrated Likert Scale to the "Concepts" enabled the assignment of scores to provide a comparative measurement to attribute the participants to the "Categories".

These score appear below:

C/A	8918
Mean	21.14
S/D	7.46

thrive
survive
languish

Participants	Support systems	Role innovation	Manageable	Personal development	Adjustment Stage Clusters
14	9	7.75	6.5	9	32.25
1	8.5	9	7	7	31.5
5	7.5	8.25	7.5	8	31.25
3	9	8.25	5	8	30.25
21	5.5	8	5	10	28.5
9	6	7.5	6.5	8	28
13	8	7.25	5	6	26.25
8	7	6.25	5	7	25.25
19	8	5	5	6.5	24.5
10	7.5	5.75	4.5	6.5	24.25
23	8	5	5	5	23
6	5	6.25	4.5	7	22.75
17	5	5	5	7.5	22.5
16	6.5	5.25	5	5	21.75
4	3	5.5	5	6	19.5
18	5	3.75	5	5	18.75
20	3.5	7.25	2.5	5	18.25
7	2	4.25	4.5	4.5	15.25
12	0	5.5	2.5	6	14
24	3	4.75	1.5	3.5	12.75
22	4.5	2	1.5	3.5	11.5
2	2	1	1.5	5	9.5
15	2	2.25	2	2	8.25
11	1.5	1.25	2.5	2.5	7.75

Appendix Q (iv)

Attribution to 'Categories' (Stage 4)

The application of a calibrated Likert Scale to the "Concepts" enabled the assignment of scores to provide a comparative measurement to attribute the participants to the "Categories".

These score appear below:

C. Alpha	0.9069
Mean	21.27
S/D	8.05

thrive
survive
languish

Participants	Relationship building	Environmental mastery	Trust and commitment	Discretion	Stability stage clusters
1	8	8.5	7	9	32.5
3	8.5	8.5	6	9	32
5	8	7.5	7	8.5	31
9	6.5	8	7.5	7.5	29.5
6	7.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	27
19	8	6.5	4	8.5	27
23	5	7.5	6.5	8	27
8	7.5	5	5	8	25.5
14	5	7	6	7.5	25.5
13	7.5	6	4	7.5	25
4	7.5	6	2	8.5	24
7	7	6.5	2	7.5	23
17	5	6.5	2.5	8.5	22.5
21	5	5	4.5	8	22.5
12	5	6	2.5	7.5	21
18	5	5	5	5	20
20	5	5	5	5	20
16	3.5	5	3.5	7	19
10	5	5	1	7.5	18.5
2	4.5	2	2	2	10.5
22	0	2	2.5	5	9.5
24	1.5	2	1	5	9.5
11	1.5	1.5	0	2	5
15	0	2	1.5	0	3.5